

9-2003

# Information Outlook, September 2003

Special Libraries Association

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the monthly magazine of the  
special libraries association  
vol. 7, no. 9  
September 2003



## *inside this issue:*

Think Like a Business, Act Like a Library: Library Public Relations  
Knowledge Management and SLA's History: An Interview with Guy St. Clair  
Discovering Corporate Virtual Reference Services  
Electronic Writing: A Core Competency  
Why The Information Age Demands We Change The Profile of Medical Libraries





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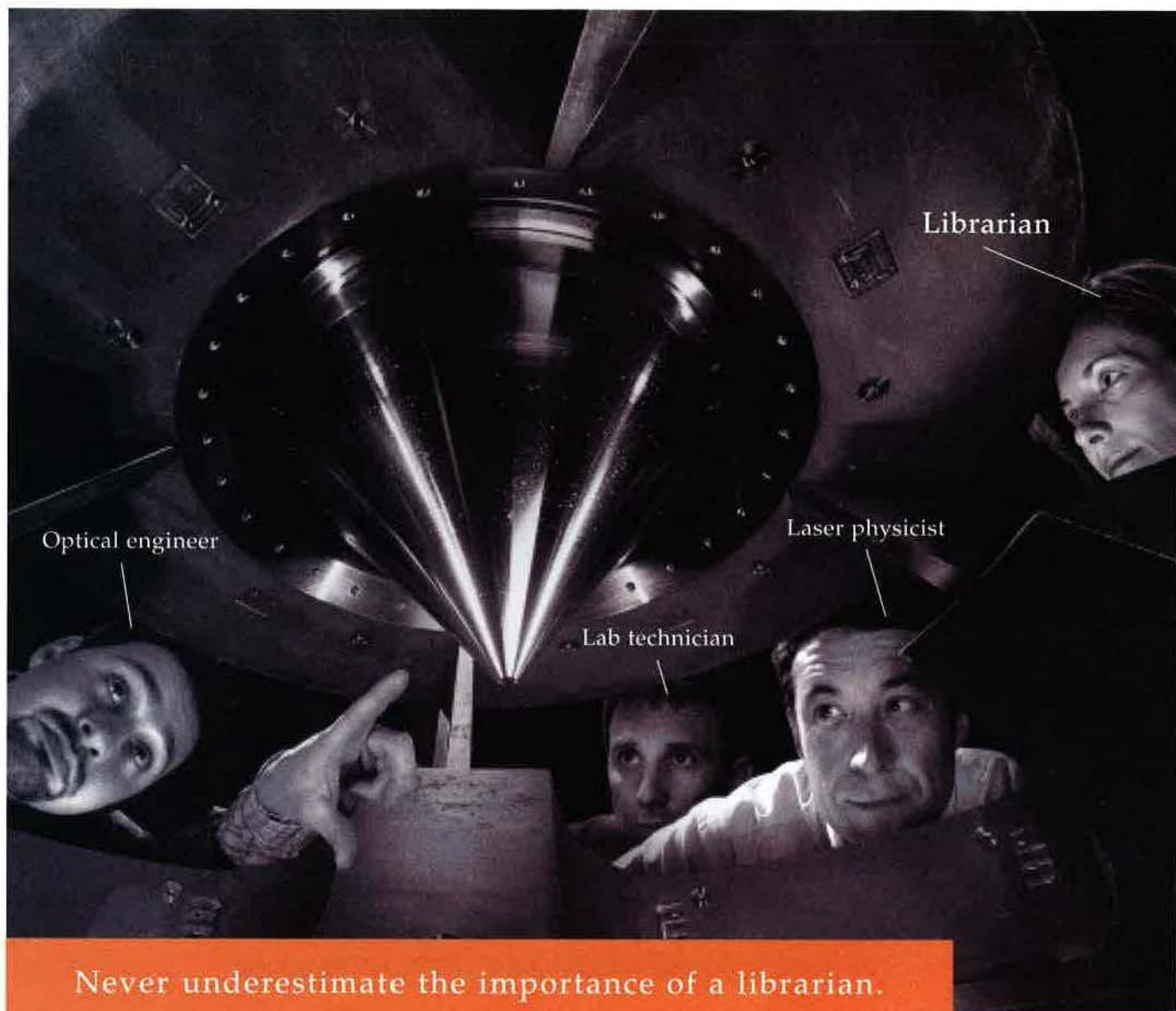
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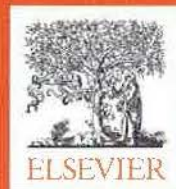
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## Features

### Think Like a Business, Act Like a Library: Library Public Relations

Daniel Stuhlman, president of Stuhlman Management Consultants in Chicago, talks about the importance of having a good PR plan to explain your library's point of view, publicize its resources and programs, promote goodwill, and market its programs. "Good public relations," he says, "results from good operations that leave positive impressions on users and nonusers."



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### Knowledge Management and SLA's History: An Interview with Guy St. Clair

One of the driving forces in Guy St. Clair's life is learning. A long-time member and supporter of SLA, he sat down with SLA Publisher, Doug Newcomb, to talk about his unique perspective on the management of information, knowledge, and learning, and about writing the association's centennial history that is to be published in 2009.



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### Discovering Corporate Virtual Reference Services

The aim of virtual reference is to form seemingly live Internet connections with customers who need information. Stephen Marvin, president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the SLA highlights some companies that provide virtual reference services, and offers insight into current services and techniques that are helping such companies achieve rapid results.



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### Electronic Writing: A Core Competency

"Clear communication that is supported by critical thinking is vital to the primary goal of our profession: conveying information effectively," says Michael Dashkin, a researcher at PricewaterhouseCoopers. He addresses how the electronic environment is changing the profession and discusses the challenges information professionals face in learning how to write with clarity in "cyberspace."

### Why The Information Age Demands We Change The Profile of Medical Libraries

Evagelia Lappa, director of the Medical Library of the General Hospital of Athens (KAT) in Athens, Greece talks about how information technology (IT) has been integrated into the work environment and library culture of the KAT library. The goal she says is to become a model electronic health science library in time for the 2004 Olympics in Athens.



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# information outlook®

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# executive outlook

## "Intersections" - Coming Together at SLA

Sometimes a sound, an image, or a word just clicks with me - and "intersection" did just that the other day. Terry Gross, National Public Radio Fresh Air® host, used the word "intersection" during one of her interviews, and I instantly saw images of Boolean Logic circles intertwining (just how many searches have I done in my two decades of being in this profession?!), teaching New Math to second graders, and a cityscape scene of trains, cars, pedestrians, bicycles, and much more all swirling around each other. All these images eventually brought me to an image of our association.

One thing that continues to fascinate me about SLA is all the intersections of our different groups and individuals, which are involved with or connected to our association. Recently I had the opportunity tell a group of executives about SLA. They were impressed with our diversity of interests, types of organizations that our members represent, the wide choice of working environments (consultants, member-owned businesses, solo librarians, multi-library centers, international, local, etc.) and even more importantly they were struck by the richness of our overall body of expertise and experience because of our individual uniqueness combined with our willingness to share our knowledge amongst ourselves and with our users/clients/patrons.

As I mentioned in my speech in New York, I encourage us to look for opportunities to collaborate with each other and to reach beyond our normal boundaries and connect with others, if only to begin a conversation. Conversations can be about possibilities, either immediate or in the distant future. By initiating a conversation, you can begin to step into a new connection or direction. In checking various meanings of "intersection", I like the *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (2000) definition, "...a set that contains elements shared by two or more given sets."

It suggests that once we find the commonality between each other, we'll also find opportunities to work together, expanding our capabilities.

Here are two examples of intersections occurring:

SLA staff continue to explore possibilities with other associations and organizations that are connected by their involvement in the information and knowledge industry. Lynn Smith regularly reports to the Board about her meetings with her colleagues to discuss new opportunities for each group's membership.

Janice Lachance and I, along with several SLA members and our partners, will have returned from the IFLA conference in Berlin, Germany by the time you read this column. Every year this event is a great example of the intersection of similar yet different groups of information professionals from all over the world. We talk about and work on common challenges, issues and opportunities ranging from access to information, implications of copyright laws in a global society, international standards, providing services in languages in addition to our native ones and more. We'll be bringing back best practices and ideas to explore with you. Expect to hear more in early fall.

If you have an "intersection" that you would like to share with me and/or the membership, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Cynthia Hill  
President 2003-04



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy".



# making news

## sla news

### New Career Development Series

SLA is pleased to present a new series of virtual seminars on career development for the library field: finding a job, building personal competencies, balancing work and life in today's world, and more. The seminars are designed to be of interest to anyone in the library field or information industry.

#### Job Hunting Online

October 8, 2003

Speaker: Rachel Singer Gordon, librarian, Franklin Park Public Library; co-author of *The Information Professional's Guide to Career Development Online*; founder and webmaster of [lisjobs.com](http://lisjobs.com); founder of "Info Career Trends" e-newsletter.

In today's economic climate, it is more important than ever that information professionals know how to use all the job-hunting tools at their disposal. Participants will learn to:

- use online tools and techniques to search for jobs,
- create and maintain electronic versions of their resumes, and
- establish an online presence that will attract potential employers.

Join our expert and learn how to market yourself as a 21st century information professional. For registration information, go to [www.sla.org/careerdevelopment](http://www.sla.org/careerdevelopment).

### SLA Announces Goldspiel Winners

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) has awarded its 2003 Steven I. Goldspiel Memorial Research Grant to Dr. Linda C. Smith and Ms. Lian Ruan for their proposal, "A Survey to Support 'Evidence-Based Practice' in Special Libraries Servicing Fire Service Personnel and Researchers in Public Safety and Homeland Security Areas." The SLA Research Committee recommended the proposal, which was

approved by SLA's Board of Directors, at its June 2003 annual business meeting in New York City. Smith is employed at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Ruan is director and head librarian at the Illinois Fire Service Institute in Champaign, IL. Named in honor of the former President of Disclosure, Inc. (now known as Global Access), the Steven I. Goldspiel Memorial Research Fund was established in 1991. The research grant is an endowment, and projects are financed solely from investment income generated by the fund. Recent awards have been close to \$20,000, though projects with smaller budgets are also encouraged. The purpose of the fund is to back projects that promote research on and support the advancement of library sciences; in particular, projects that address the goals identified in the SLA Research Statement, which can be found at <http://www.sla.org/content/memberservice/researchforum/goldspiel/index.cfm>.

In the age of knowledge-based organizations, all professions are placing greater emphasis on identifying core competencies and basing decisionmaking on sound evidence of what works. As the product of systematic study and experimentation, research and its publication in peer-reviewed sources continues to be the primary evidence-based resource for professionals who claim to practice in a scientific manner. This approach is most evident in the natural and life sciences; however, many professions are now developing strong evidence bases that practitioners can share and apply. Accordingly, in June 2001, the SLA Board of Directors adopted a new research statement, "Putting OUR Knowledge to Work," based on the concept of evidence-based practice. This approach encourages the creation of new evidence, through the Goldspiel research grant and other initiatives, to make research central to the practice of special library and information management.

This evidence-based approach should be the key emphasis in applications for SLA's annual Goldspiel Research Award Program. For special librarians, evidence-based practice refers to consciously and consistently making professional-level decisions that are based on the strongest evidence of what would work best for their clients. The areas in which decisions are made in library and information practice are cited in SLA's Competencies for Special Librarians of the 21st Century and include the following: selection and acquisition of information resources, methods of information access, selection and use of information technologies, and management of library and information services. Techniques that special librarians can use to build their own evidence base include benchmarking, program evaluation, quality management, performance measurement, best practices identification, and operations research. For further information or application guidelines, please contact John Latham at [john@sla.org](mailto:john@sla.org) or (202) 939-3639.

### Factiva to Sponsor the KEX

SLA announces that Factiva, a Dow Jones and Reuters Company, will have sole sponsorship of SLA's Knowledge Exchange (KEX). This new sponsorship will enable SLA to develop KEX's virtual resources and meet the goals of being a model of virtual information exchange, serving the global needs of SLA knowledge workers. The KEX will have access to Factiva's online products.

### Call for Papers-Nashville 2004

SLA is accepting submissions for its Conference Professional Papers, June 5-10, 2004, in Nashville, Tennessee. Deadlines are as follow:

September 16, 2003-Submit an abstract to Theo Jones-Quartey via e-mail at [theo.s.jones-quartey@grace.com](mailto:theo.s.jones-quartey@grace.com).



Abstracts should be approximately 250-300 words long.

March 15, 2004-Submission deadline for the complete text of the accepted paper to the association office. Send papers to [contributedpapers@sla.org](mailto:contributedpapers@sla.org).

Length-Presentation of the paper should be no longer than 15 minutes.

Requirements-In order for a professional paper to be considered for acceptance, the following requirements apply:

1. The abstract has been received by the deadline.
2. The author (or co-author) is a member of SLA.
3. The author (or co-author) commits to present the paper at the annual conference.

Abstracts will be judged on the relevance to the conference theme, substance, and potential member interest. Applicants will be notified of acceptance by October 31, 2003, and will receive full instructions on format for the complete text of the professional paper.

Paper and Page Specifications-All papers must be submitted electronically to [contributedpapers@sla.org](mailto:contributedpapers@sla.org). The paper should be in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format. If you do not have access to either of these programs, please send a version in unformatted text-only format (ASCII, \*.rtf, or \*.txt for text on diskette, included in main mail window-not as an attachment-for e-mail). If you need instructions on saving your document as one of these file formats, please contact [Contributedpapers@sla.org](mailto:Contributedpapers@sla.org).

A printed copy must also be sent to SLA headquarters at

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Papers are now posted online. To see examples of papers from SLA's 94th Annual Conference in New York, go to <http://www.sla.org/content/Events/conference/2003annual/slacontribpapers.cfm>.

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### Diversity Leadership Development Award Deadline

The Diversity Leadership Development Program (DLDP) Committee would like to invite nominations for the Diversity Leadership Development Award. The deadline for submitting an application is December 5, 2003.

Two of the committee's goals are to help accelerate the advancement

and visibility of members who represent a diverse population of the association, by mentoring them for more leadership opportunities within SLA, and to ensure that the association remains vital, relevant, and representative of its diverse membership. The award winner receives \$1,000 to attend the SLA Annual Conference in Nashville, complimentary conference registration, and a SLA mentor to help him



or her understand the roles and mechanics of SLA leadership.

*Eligibility requirements for the award:*

1. Applicant must have been a member of SLA for at least two years.
2. Applicants must be a member of a population group that is underrepresented in SLA.
3. Applicant must have 3-10 years of professional library information experience.
4. Applicant cannot be a current SLA DLDAP Committee member.

If you know of someone who meets these eligibility requirements, please encourage him or her to apply. Up to five winners are chosen each year. This is a wonderful opportunity to network and gain leadership skills!

Again, the application deadline is December 5, 2003.

For more information and the application form, please see <http://www.sla.org/content/memberservice/communication/pr/awddindex/sla/dldpnomform.cfm>.

## SLA Virtual Seminars

### Knowledge Management: The Role of Storytelling

October 29, 2003

2:00 pm-3:30 pm ET.

*Your Virtual Seminar Leader.* Michael Kull, Ph.D., is an absent-minded professor with delusions of becoming a famous moviemaker. His graduate courses and executive seminars force people to reflect on uncomfortable realities, unrealistic dreams, and on finding the courage and tools for creating uncompromised value through work. He is an instructor at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and executive producer of AMPLIFI, an advisory and new media firm providing knowledge and services for amplifying organizational intelligence through digital storytelling. He has a couple books in the works, a few hundred presentations scattered about the Web, and produces documentaries on leaders and leading management practices. He feels that Marshall McLuhan was right when he said, "Education is entertainment; whoever doesn't understand that doesn't understand either." His passion is making a

difference in the world by helping organizations bring knowledge to life, and vice-versa.

#### Description

In times of change, the first and often best knowledge available to leaders is the story. In many important ways, stories are our knowledge, and practical approaches for creating and relating stories need to be part of any comprehensive knowledge strategy. This seminar explores the links between storytelling and knowledge management. Narrative knowledge is compared with other ways of knowing for sharing knowledge within and across an enterprise and for compelling people to act. Of particular interest is the role of the information professional as a strategic ally in the quest to create meaning from data. Knowledge by itself is inert; only when it is published, talked up, and integrated into an organization's culture and policies does it create value. The intelligent enterprise is one that tells authentic stories: stories that motivate, enlighten, and serve as the precursor to new initiatives in marketing and innovation.

#### Learning Questions/Objectives

##### What you will learn:

- Why is storytelling more important today than it was, say, ten or 2000 years ago?
- How are storytelling and knowledge management strategies related?
- What can my organization do to "scale the water-cooler" so people want to share their stories?
- How will storytelling add value to my presentations if I prefer using slides and charts?

##### What you will gain:

- A rich and practical understanding of the value of storytelling in organizations and communities of practice.
- A clear framework for classifying organizational stories and the knowledge they convey.
- A few simple and inexpensive methods for eliciting, structuring, and communicating stories.
- A great cocktail-party conversation starter and something else to talk about at the movie theater.

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### The Visible Librarian: Asserting Your Value Through Marketing and Advocacy

November 19, 2003

2:00 pm-3:30 pm ET

*Your Virtual Seminar Leader.* Judith A. Siess is a recognized expert in one-person librarianship and inter-personal networking. For years she has been telling librarians that they need to sell their libraries and themselves. Recently the American Library Association took notice of this and asked her to write a book on advocacy and marketing as a way for librarians to keep their jobs. From this book came the workshop of the same title.

Siess has been a librarian for more than 20 years and has written three other books: *The SOLO Librarian's Sourcebook* (Information Today, 1997), *The OPL Sourcebook: A Guide for Solo and Small Libraries* (Information Today, 2001), and *Time Management, Planning and Prioritization for Librarians* (Scarecrow, 2002). Since 1998, Siess has been the editor and publisher of *The One-Person Library: A Newsletter for Librarians and Management*. She has taught one- and two-day seminars on library management all over the United States and in Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Spain, and the United Kingdom. You can find out more about Siess at her website, <http://www.ibi-opl.com>.

#### Description

Since the late twentieth century,

libraries no longer have been a given. Some librarians have known this for a long time. For example, hospital accreditation rules used to require a library onsite and a degreed librarian on staff. However, recent changes in the accreditation guidelines only require "access" to medical information. When Baker and McKenzie, the largest law firm in the United States, closed its library, law firms all over the country followed suit. The not-for-profit sector is not immune. Branches of public libraries are being closed, and school libraries are being merged or combined with the public library or even eliminated. Even in the "safe" academic library, positions are being eliminated and branches or departmental libraries closed.

*Why is this happening?* Because librarians have not marketed themselves and their services to management-to the decisionmakers. We also have not been good at advocacy. We don't speak up for ourselves and recruit others to do the same; we don't acquire and use library champions.

*Why don't we market and practice advocacy?* There are several reasons.

1. We don't realize how important it is to our continued well-being and even survival, even though we've been told to market over and over.
2. We don't know how.
3. We don't have time.

*Libraries have been threatened before and they have survived. Why should we be more concerned now?* There are several reasons.

1. The rise of the Internet.
2. The apparent popularity of end-user searching.
3. The number of libraries going "virtual"; that is, eliminating their physical presence in organizations.

#### *Critical Learning Questions*

- What is the difference between marketing and advocacy? Between marketing and sales? Between publicity and public relations?
- Why, who, what, when, where, and how should librarians market their libraries and themselves?
- What are the six essential P's of marketing?
- What is the public's image of

librarians, what should it be, and what can we do about to change it?

One final word. You won't learn to market just by taking this seminar; it will only give you some of the basics. You learn by doing-finding out what works for you, your library, and your clients.

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# Think Like a Business, Act Like a Library:

## Library Public Relations

By Daniel Stuhlman

*Daniel D. Stuhlman is president of Stuhlman Management Consultants, Chicago, IL, a firm dedicated to turning data and information into knowledge. He teaches part-time for San José State University, School of Library and Information Science. He can be reached at [ddstuhlman@earthlink.net](mailto:ddstuhlman@earthlink.net) or through his website: <http://home.earthlink.net/~ddstuhlman/liblob.htm>*

### • Having a Good PR Plan

**Every library deals with a "public." Whether your library is large or small, general or special, organizational or city, private or public, you need to be concerned about your patrons and potential patrons. Libraries are always concerned with improving services and communications for users and support groups. Every library has support groups, such as taxpayers, trustees, donors, administrators, or owners, to whom the library needs to constantly prove the value of its services. Both users and nonusers need to know what the library offers and what it could offer if given more support. No library can coast on the assumption that its services are vital to its city or institutions. Libraries are vital only if the community perceives them as vital.**

Public relations is a process for all librarians. We promote our individual libraries, our library groups, our profession, and information services in general. Libraries compete for the time and attention of the public. The public must be educated on many levels. Public relations is a communications process in which every part of the library has a stake. Public relations is not limited to the professionals or those who write press releases. Good public relations results from good operations that leave positive impressions on users and nonusers. Good impressions strike the public in many ways, through words and environments.

Finding solutions means finding the correct questions. This article will raise questions, make you aware of situations and difficulties, and offer some ideas for you to implement.

### Librarians' Expertise

Not everyone understands the depth of librarians' expertise or how they can be of help. A few years ago, a computer magazine editor wrote about a problem with a talk show host. The editor, who needed to contact the host, did not realize that a librarian could help her with this question. I had recently researched the process of contacting celebrities because a few weeks earlier, a fellow librarian had needed to contact a well-known actor. This librarian couldn't find the answer with his resources and so put the query to fellow librarians. I made a call to a cousin who is an actor, and he was able to give me the clues I needed to find websites for information on entertainment-industry agents or attorneys. A great deal of such contact information can be found via a website. If the celebrity wants to be



contacted, the process takes two phone calls. I was able to help this editor through an e-mail. She sent a personal thank-you. I was hoping that she would mention in her column that a librarian had helped. She didn't, but I hope that I won at least one friend of the library.

Many times I have seen queries for help from scholars on Internet mailing lists. Frequently the answers require a reference interview. Librarians need to clarify the questions to give the appropriate help. Once the question is clarified, the answer is much easier to find. Scholars need to know that librarians can listen and help guide them in this clarification stage of research.

If you have examples of how you helped a patron, you should spread the word as to what you did. Tell everyone about the expertise of your staff and librarians in general. Community relations is the process of letting nonusers understand what libraries and librarians have to offer. Tell everyone that librarians listen and help solve puzzles.

### Library Staff

A big problem in organizations (this is not limited to libraries) is inadequate internal communications. All staff members need the information and tools to do their job. When the public sees well-informed staff, they have a positive view of the library. The public does not always know the difference between a librarian and a paraprofessional. Everyone is an expert in some aspect of the library's operation. Seek the opinion of all levels of staff when creating a philosophy of operation, priorities, policies, and rules. When staff members have a stake in the decisionmaking, they will be better able to follow the policy.

The following is an example of poor communication and a solution for correcting the problem. Library ABC has a policy that only qualified reference librarians may answer patron questions. No matter the question, even those concerning directions, the clerk must refer the patron to the reference desk. This kind of policy leads to patrons feeling pushed aside and given the runaround and causes them to view the front desk staff as uncooperative or ignorant. The staff feels helpless.

The improved policy is to make sure that all staff members are cross-trained in many aspects of the library operation. The improved policy should be discussed with professional and clerical staff to make sure they understand how to make patrons feel welcome. The first contact staff member makes sure that he or she answers the question or directs the patron to the best person. Questions concerning directions and events do not require the expertise of a reference librarian. Such questions directed to reference librarians may be passed to another who can better serve the patron. All staff stay informed about events and activities in the building so that patrons feel welcome.

Remember that just as a business wants to keep customers, libraries want to keep patrons because they pay the bills—through their taxes, tuition, dues, or institutional support.

### Library Policies

Every policy must take into account public perception. What is the level of acceptable conversation or sounds in the reading room? Do you have a quiet room? Do you have meeting rooms for group discussions? Do you have a policy for cell phone use? Do you have photocopy machines that are simple to use? Do you have a policy to deal with situations of conflict, such as when the needs of one user conflict with another? Do you have a user-friendly circulation policy? Do you have a policy for dealing with difficult patrons?

How old is your circulation policy? Has anything changed to make four-week loans a better policy than three-week loans? Is there a provision for vacation loans? What is the purpose of fines—revenue or reminders to return books on time?

Do patrons need to wait in line for your OPAC? Do you have enough computers for Internet access? Do you have printers? Which is more cost-effective, charging for computer printouts or not charging?

Are rules rigid or flexible? What is the process to change a rule? Do you constantly look at the return on investments?

### Goodwill and Return on Investment

Every program should be examined for its return on investment. Remember that the return does not have to be monetary. Goodwill and pleasant experiences are important too. One day that goodwill will translate into funding and support. A few months ago I happened to visit a public library when it was hosting a jazz concert. When I walked into the library, the only clue I noticed of a concert being held presented itself when I passed the door to the auditorium before entering the main part of the library. I saw some people setting up the room. I had no idea that a free library-sponsored concert was to start in the next few minutes. If there was a sign, it was small and undistinguished. There was no line of people waiting to get in. After asking what was going on, I found out that tickets were required. I was not interested in attending the concert. While I was looking for the information that I came for, I heard the music penetrate into the reading room. At first I thought this was a great thing for the library to do on a Sunday afternoon. Then I realized no one in the reading room cared for the music. I peeked into the auditorium and saw fewer than 10 people in the audience. I felt sorry for the musicians. They prepared a concert, yet no one came.

Let's examine the perceived success or failure of this program. What was the return on investment? Did the few people who attended have a good time? Did the musicians have a good time or were they disappointed? Did the concert generate good will? An announcement on the PA system would have encouraged people to attend and would have alerted those in the reading room as to the source of the music. The library failed to generate positive public relations with the people



already in the library. It is always a good idea to inform people as to the source of loud sounds, even if the sound is music. I don't know if the library attempted to turn failure into success by writing about the program. A library should evaluate its return on the investment for the staff time that is required for such programs.

### **How do you have a program that raises goodwill and has a positive return on investment?**

1. Do your homework. Make sure that the program is one the audience will support. If you have a concert, make sure your community has an interest in that type of music. Schedule the event at an appropriate time and venue.

2. Coordinate publicity. Inform your staff of the event, send notices to regular patrons, post signs and notices, put notices in your newsletters, and send press releases. Make sure that the public knows that this is a library event. Make sure they understand its relationship to the library's mission. If this event is designed to get people into the library, make this goal clear in your planning.

3. Advertise like a business. You don't need TV ads, but you do need to hit people in multiple ways. Post signs, tell patrons, and send mailings. Do whatever it takes to get the message out to people.

4. Plan for follow-up. Even if attendance is small, make sure you have a public relations victory. For example, plan to take photographs for the purposes of doing a write-up about the event.

### **Act Like a Business, Think Like a Library**

Businesses try several kinds of messages to encourage sales. Libraries need point-of-sale promotions, displays of new materials, displays of treasures, displays on special topics, proper signs, lures to encourage visitors, giveaways, and diversions. The delivery system need not cost a lot of money.

Point-of-sale promotions could simply take the form of shelf signs encouraging patrons to try a particular book or section. This idea is comparable to a store that offers a sale price on a particular shelf. Widening the point-of-sale concept to general promotions are information sheets or bibliographies on current topics that the information desk displays. Displays of new materials encourage the casual reader to browse and check out a book that he or she would never have known existed. Compare this approach to impulse buying or new merchandise displays in a retail store. The idea is to encourage people to come in for one reason and leave with a book they had no prior intention of borrowing.

Displays of treasures are ways to share valuable materials with the public. These displays emphasize the value of the library as a guardian of the past, a bridge to the future, and a teacher. Books and other library materials are artifacts. Because of the need to preserve materials,

libraries often need a "do not touch" policy for them. A display enables more people to become aware of the library's role as a museum. We need to remind patrons that the library has a role in the preservation of the past; some day a researcher may need the materials to learn something new from something old.

Displays on special topics bring together materials to inform and/or amuse patrons, particularly those who might be unaware of these materials. Similarly, displays in the business world are designed to show off current merchandise. Libraries can learn from the business sector about the merchandising of materials. Businesses can learn from libraries about content—for example, the idea that the display is a tool, not a show.

Libraries can feature giveaways such as bookmarks with the library's name, address, phone number, and hours. This encourages readers to remember to call on the library and keeps the library's name handy. Pencils, pens, pads of paper, and brochures can be printed with the library logo as giveaways. The idea is to keep the library name in the public's mind. One library had a bookmark-design contest for children. The library had the bookmark printed and presented the winner with two giant copies—one for the winner and one for his or her classroom. The positive publicity that resulted was amazing. All the schools in the area and all the library patrons knew about the contest. The winner was publicized in the local press and acknowledged in school. Both the library and the school gained positive publicity.

Does your library have a handout about itself? Do you make this handout available in other places on your campus or building?

You can place diversions in your library to give the place some warmth. Examples are aquariums, plants, artwork, comfortable chairs, and gardens.

Signs are extremely important. First, you don't want to waste staff time constantly giving patrons information that they can easily read for themselves on a sign. Second, patrons should feel empowered and welcomed. A patron who can find a place without help has saved you time and avoided having to ask what may be an embarrassing question.

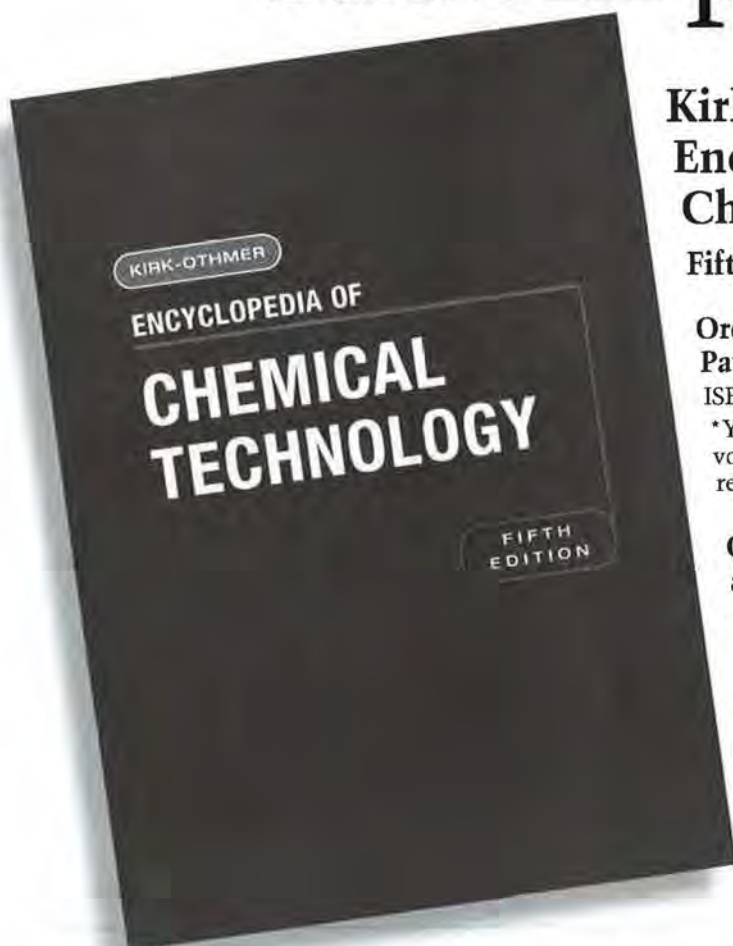
### **Appearances**

Is the physical appearance of the library encouraging to patrons? The floor plan should have been part of the original planning, but what has been done lately? Is the library neat and orderly? Are books dusty or clean? Is parking convenient? Is the room clearly marked as a library? Are the hours posted on the library door and in other places in the building (if part of another institution)? On a multi-building campus, are signs in place to direct patrons to the right place? Have you made provisions for after-hours returns? For public libraries, how are you listed in the phone books—under "Libraries," "Public Libraries," or the name of your town?



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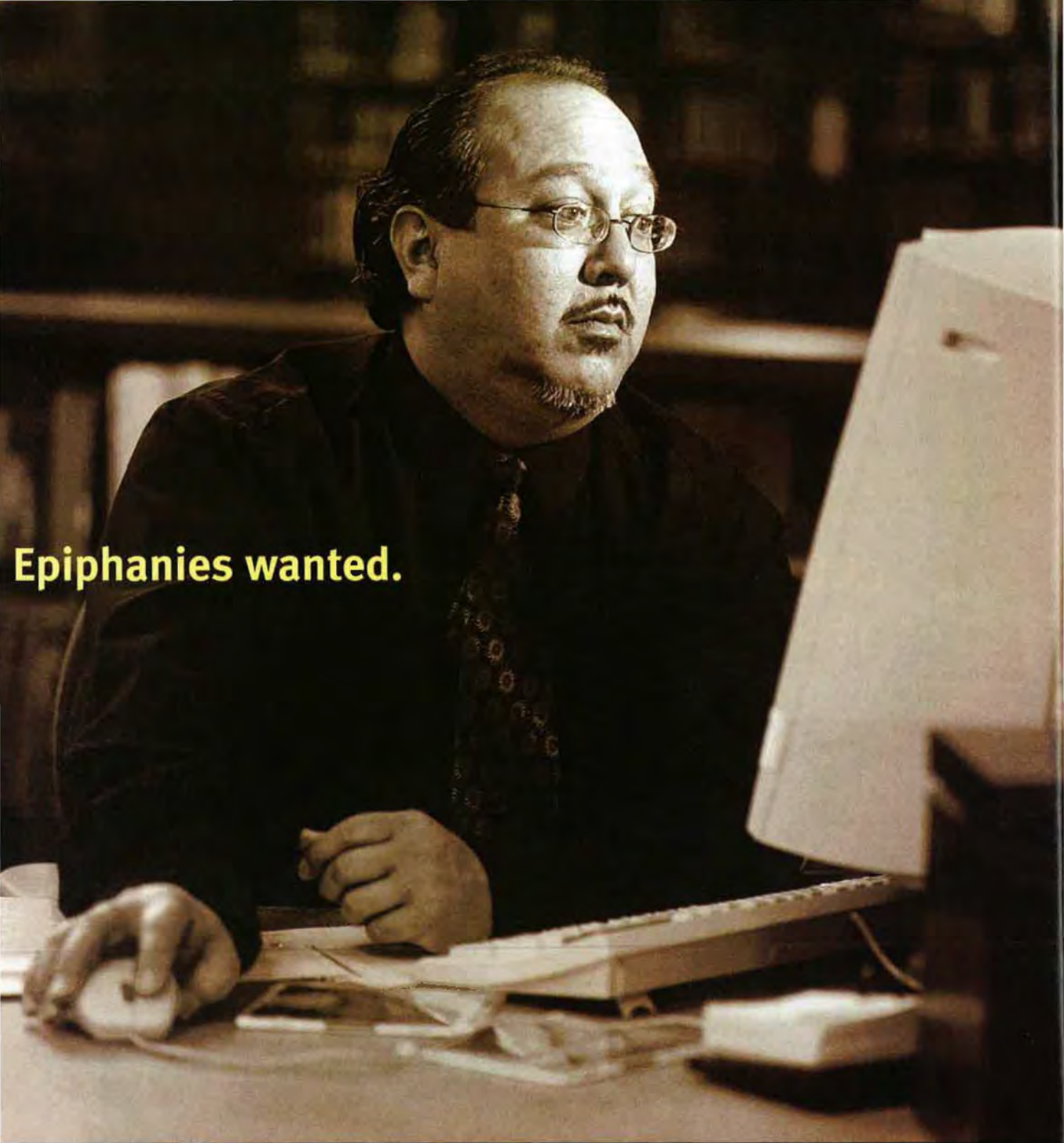
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What provisions have you made for patrons with disabilities? These provisions encompass accommodations not only for people in wheelchairs, but also for tall and short people. For example, when my son was five years old, he wanted to look for a book in the catalog. The library's OPAC was accessible only from computer terminals on a standup desk at an adult-appropriate height. This library had no sit-down terminals, stepstools, or provisions for children or short people to access the catalog. Although my son could read and look at the computer, he could not use it unless I held him up. It took over a year to get that library to recognize the problem and correct it. It seemed so simple to change the table or get a stepstool. Signs also need to fit the average height level. Eye-level for people 6' 3" is much higher than for those 5' 2".

First impressions count. Do you need to remove barriers to new users? Are lighting and climate control sufficient? Do you have enough seats and tables?

### Marketing Survey

How do you find out what your patrons and sponsoring body need and want? What are the lines of communications? Have you done a formal survey? Have you figured out a patron profile? In school libraries, it is possible that all the students come into the library daily. However, a school library still needs to define its public and examine its needs. Some students go through four years of high school without ever consulting a library book. For others it is a daily occurrence.

Marketing efforts might begin with improving service for those who need it the most, then expanding the scope to determine the best way to serve infrequent users and nonusers.

### Media Relations

The media are any means of communication with multiple people. You need to understand what the media are providing and the strength of each medium. The library may have an e-mail list that sends information on a periodic basis to subscribers. Web pages allow the library to serve patrons anywhere, at any time. The library has control of the mailing lists and Web pages. The other media are controlled by editors who have their own interests and who are subject to market forces. If you match your interests with theirs, the library has a better chance of getting coverage.

Newspapers, general-interest magazines, television, and radio look for news and features that inform their audience. The competition for space and time is intense. Libraries have to compete with other non-profits as well as news about accidents and community events. One way of ensuring a match with your needs and those of the media is to peg the story to a special, timed event. Invite the media to an award ceremony or special display opening. Make the event newsworthy; do something different or unusual. A summer reading program that occurs every year is not newsworthy. An award to summer readers given by a famous author is newsworthy. The acquisition of current bestsellers is

not newsworthy because it is a routine occurrence for the library. A rare 15th-century book donated to the library is special.

Schedule awards and presentation ceremonies at times that facilitate coverage. Make it as easy as possible for the media to cover the event. Provide maps and parking directions if needed. Plan for visually interesting events. The mayor reading a declaration might not make for interesting photos or video; releasing dozens of helium balloons with the library logo would. If the library receives a large donation, have a giant mock check for presentation purposes. I saw this done on the Today Show just this morning. Take your own photographs for library display and for the historical record. Give reporters printed background information and a copy of your news release.

Don't forget the personal touch. Stay on the good side of editors. Give them every reason to use your material.

### Internal Publications

A library needs to maintain several kinds of internal publications. For academic libraries, a newsletter to alumni and friends provides a vehicle for showing off the library, obtaining donations, and garnering goodwill. Alumni like to hear good news from their alma mater. Some donors like the publicity; some don't. Listen to their wishes. If the library is big enough, a staff newsletter keeps people in far-flung locations in touch. Producing internal publications requires writing and design skills, which most librarians will need to acquire on the job. The director of a small library may need to learn how to create camera-ready flyers. With the improved technology of word processing and other software packages over the last couple of decades, this task has become much easier.

### Actions

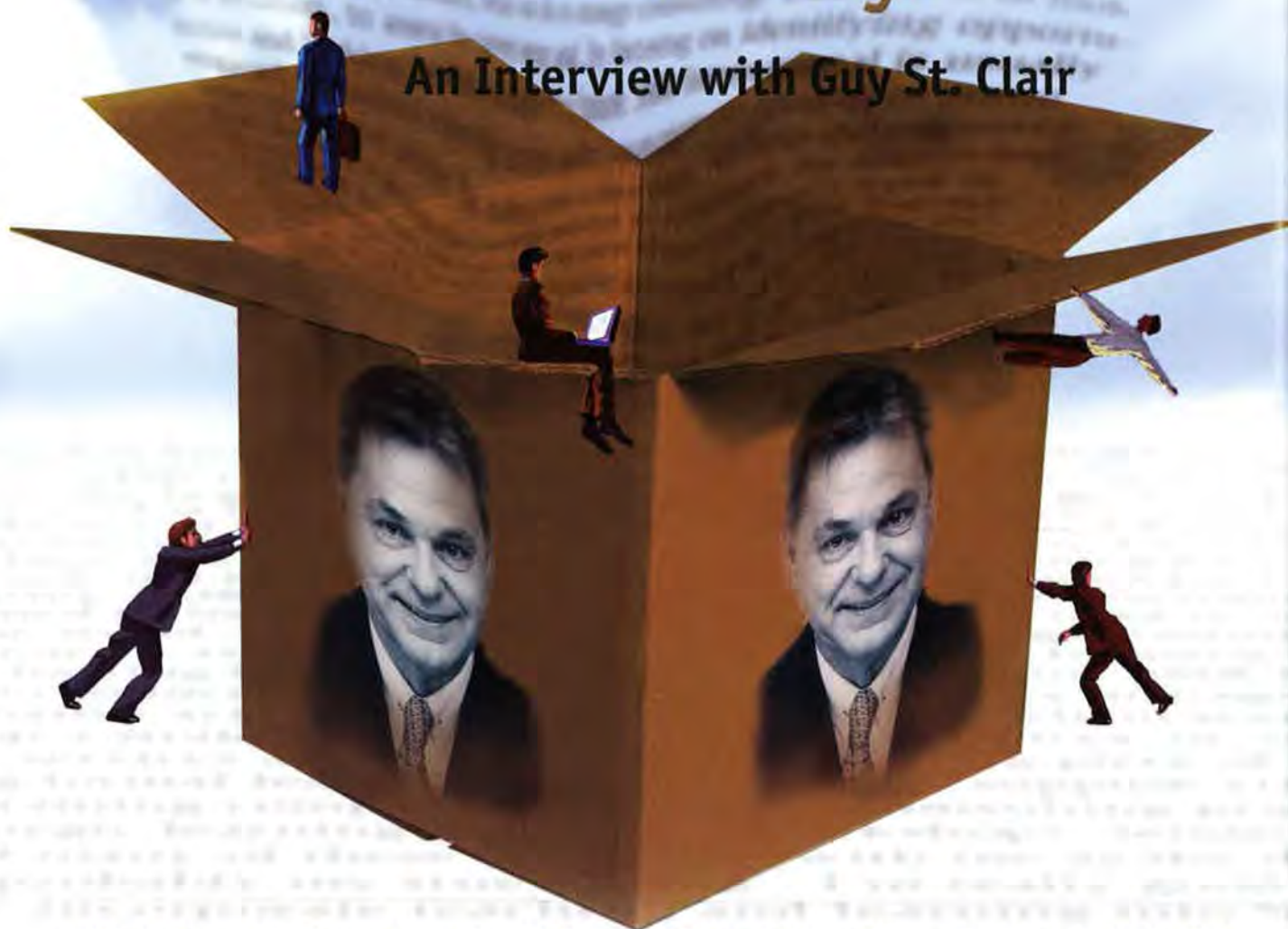
The final question to ask yourself: Who is going to do public relations in your library? You are. If you are the director, you will assign tasks to the appropriate staff person or to an outside consultant. If you are a staff member, you have to be actively involved. The writing, artwork, layout, and distribution of the results need to be coordinated. The size of the library and its needs dictate the level of expertise and time for each project. When I was a library director I did all the writing and layout of flyers; I completed press releases in consultation with others in the organization.

Public relations is an important component of the library operation. Libraries need to maintain a high level of public awareness. No library, with the exception of personal libraries, is without a public or sponsoring organization. In times of tight fiscal budgets and resource limitations, an effective public relations plan is essential. The plan sets up the procedures, action plans, and evaluation procedures. Good public relations explains the library's point of view, publicizes its resources and programs, promotes goodwill, markets its programs, sells ideas, and encourages support.



# Knowledge Services and SLA's History:

## An Interview with Guy St. Clair



### • SLA: Nearly One Hundred Years of “Putting Knowledge to Work”

For more than 30 years, Guy St. Clair has focused much of his attention on specialized libraries and on SLA. His experience with the association (including a term as SLA's president in 1991-1992) has provided St. Clair with a unique perspective on the management of information, knowledge, and learning, the three disciplines that he says are converging in the coming new profession of knowledge services. St. Clair has even written a book about how knowledge services practitioners should be educated (*Beyond Degrees: Professional Learning for Knowledge Services*, 2002 published by K.G. Saur). Not so coincidentally, St. Clair is also the author of SLA's centennial history, to be published in 2009. Already well into the SLA project, St. Clair is finding useful parallels for today's knowledge professionals in the attention that SLA's founders gave to practical information.

It's a topic that St. Clair frequently brings into his many presentations about knowledge services. He has just concluded a series of speeches and lectures about the new information profession for a variety of audiences, including some as far away as Australia and New Zealand. He has spoken on the subject to eight of SLA's North American chapters. St. Clair recently found time in his busy schedule to speak with Douglas Newcomb about SLA's history and how that history has led organizations to focus on knowledge services.

**Information Outlook:** What is it that's drawn you to SLA over the years? You've been a member for many years, and you often speak about how you "couldn't have had a career" without SLA. What does that mean?





**Guy St. Clair:** My career has focused on learning. It's one of the driving forces in my life, this quest—almost an obsession, I suppose—to learn. My career began in librarianship, and it was while I was working in a specialized library that I was introduced to SLA. From the beginning, SLA was a place for me to grow, to learn, and to share with others what I've learned. And that's the very essence of knowledge services, what I like to call KD/KS, knowledge development and knowledge sharing. As my career has moved forward, I've been very fortunate to have a relationship with SLA. It's been SLA that's provided the strategic learning for me, as well as the connections and, not to put too fine a point on it, a market for my company's services.

**IO:** What are those services? What do you do?

**GStC:** Our company, SMR International, is a management consulting practice. Although we're located in New York City, I go wherever the need is, and that means I work all over the world. Basically, what we do is strategy consulting. Our job is to look at a situation, to assess the current setup and, by focusing on identifying opportunities and looking for results, to imagine the future. SMR International is usually engaged to conduct a knowledge services audit, a management review, or some other evaluative activity. Then, working with a client team, we help the organization develop a strategy plan for knowledge services, or, sometimes, for improving knowledge services already in place.

**IO:** Don't you do a lot of training as well?

**GStC:** Yes. A big piece of our company's work is establishing formal learning activities, and I suppose you could say SMR International is a training company as well as a consulting practice. We put together all sorts of strategic learning programs, workshops, seminars, and the like for organizations, and many of these are set up with me as the discussion leader or teacher. Teaching is probably my true calling—I'm really good at it, and it's what I love. So of course we incorporate teaching and learning into SMR International's work.

**IO:** Your company's area of expertise is knowledge services. Talk a little more about the concept.

**GStC:** Knowledge services is a name I've given to the convergence of information management, knowledge management, and strategic (performance-centered) learning in society today, particularly in the organizational workplace. I speak of knowledge services as the new profession for information and knowledge workers, because it's what I've identified that information customers and organizational management want—and need—as they attempt to deal with all the information and knowledge that's hurled at them, and for which they often have some level of responsibility. With respect to knowledge services, it long ago became clear to me that the people who do it best are specialist librarians, people like members of SLA. So it's our company's job to work with these people, many of whom

I know through SLA, to provide the links, to help organizations figure out how they can converge these three disciplines for best performance as they seek to achieve their organizational mission.

**IO:** Do you envision this new profession as being different from library and information management as practiced today?

**GStC:** Absolutely. I see knowledge services as a new profession that embraces all practitioners in all the disciplines that support information management, knowledge management, and strategic learning. That includes, of course, specialist librarians, and we should be taking the lead in this effort. But it also includes a lot more than library management, and it requires us—in our thinking as employees—to move from the "library" side of our work to a broader, more organizational focus. The role of knowledge services professionals is to facilitate KD/KS in their organizations, to set up a framework—an ambiance, if you will—so that knowledge development and knowledge sharing are routinely built in to every transaction and every interaction that takes place. No one does this as well as specialist librarians. In fact, we've been doing it all along, so we're naturally the best people for leading the knowledge services effort in our organizations.

**IO:** Why?

**GStC:** Because we're not like other librarians or, indeed, like any other practitioners in the information industry. As I work on the association's centenary history, a couple of things have become clear to me. One is that there is a clearly established distinction between specialized librarianship and other forms of librarianship. As I've worked on the history, I've come to understand that this difference is—and has been all along—one of definition. Specialized librarianship exists to provide practical information. It's what our founders had in mind, and of course that attention to the delivery of practical information was what caused so much of the tension with library leaders of the time. For the profession's leaders in those days, librarianship existed as part of the educational framework. Librarianship was thought of (and still is, by some people) as a scholarly, academic, cultural, and—for some librarians—an almost "social-work" type of profession. In this latter respect, nineteenth-century librarianship was characterized by, as one historian has put it, its almost missionary-like zeal in attempting to "better" the lives of people by exposing them to reading. And we know that much of that has carried over into librarianship as it is practiced today. That's not what specialist librarians do, so it's very much a question of definition.

**IO:** Can you elaborate?

**GStC:** The history of specialized librarianship identifies three unique attributes of specialized libraries. The first is that the collections (or the services provided, if what you have is an information or knowledge center that is not a collection of materials) have to do with a particular—





or "special"—subject or field of interest. The second, naturally enough, is that the customers for whom these services are provided are also "special" in that they have particular needs and requirements relating to that subject or field of interest. But the most important distinction is the third reason specialist librarians are different: Success in specialized librarianship requires—no, demands—a collaborative relationship between the information provider—the specialist librarian—and the information customer. This isn't the case with other types of librarianship. Librarianship as it is generally practiced is not built on a collaborative relationship between the user and the librarian. Specialized librarianship is.

**IO:** But doesn't any user collaborate with the information provider when he or she asks a question?

**GStC:** Not necessarily. Often it's just a quick "here's-what-I-need" kind of query, and the librarian points the user to where the information can be found. And, if necessary, teaches that person to use the tool that provides the information. In specialized librarianship—and in knowledge services—that transaction builds on finding the best information and delivering it in whatever format is required. To do this well, the information provider must enter into an almost intimate collaborative relationship with the user, to understand what is required for providing the best information.

**IO:** So knowledge services is about collaboration?

**GStC:** Collaboration is the very foundation of knowledge services, of establishing a management framework in which information, knowledge, and learning are all organized and managed with one goal in mind: the successful achievement of the organization's mission. And I contend that no one is better qualified to do this than specialist librarians.



**IO:** And these qualifications make specialist librarians unique?

**GStC:** Yes. As was shown in the work of the PREPS Commission back in the early 1990s, in SLA's splendid and seminal work on competencies for specialized librarianship, and in the writings of many of its members (particularly Marion Paris in her important article in the December 1999 issue of *Information Outlook*), specialized librarianship is not like the general profession of librarianship that has evolved. Naturally, that very situation has contributed to a great deal of the tension that exists between specialist librarians and other librarians, but that's nothing new. That tension has been in place throughout the history of specialized librarianship.

**IO:** Is that a bad thing?

**GStC:** Not at all. It's a little uncomfortable from time to time, and at certain points in SLA's history some bad feelings were generated and some very unpleasant actions were taken, but, by and large, I think this tension is a good thing. It forces specialist librarians—and other knowledge services professionals as we move into the new profession—to understand that their role in their organizations is directly connected to the work they do, the providing of practical and utilitarian information that helps the employing organization succeed. It's not academic, or theoretical, or cultural, or created to advance some social or political agenda. It's not educational. And it's certainly not social work, in the sense that you're going to make someone a better person because he or she comes to the library. It's there to provide support for the organization.

**IO:** When did all this happen, this separating of specialized librarianship from other forms of librarianship?

**GStC:** Well, it's been around a long time, but it all really started in the nineteenth century, probably connected in some way with the industrial revolution and the need for information to support industry. By 1909, this distinction had been identified and was totally accepted by Dana, Marion, Whitten, Lee, Handy, and SLA's other founders, and they were very clear about what they were trying to do. In the words of John Lapp, specialized librarianship is all about "putting knowledge to work." These people recognized that the general notion of librarianship—as then practiced and continuing long into modern times—was not doing that, was not meeting these needs.





**IO:** So was there a divergence between established librarianship and specialized librarianship?

**GStC:** Yes. In established librarianship, knowledge was certainly being collected and organized. But it wasn't being put to work, not through the efforts of librarians. The new approach to information—the rethinking of the role of the library that led to the founding of SLA—was needed because information customers needed it then, needed a new way of thinking about information and information delivery. In fact, in the SLA history, I have a chapter at the beginning of the book entitled "The Establishment of Modern Librarianship in America." In this chapter, I assert that it was with the founding of SLA that modern American librarianship—as we know it—came into being. What Americans required was a two-track type of librarianship: one concentrating on academic, scholarly, cultural, and societal needs; the other providing practical and utilitarian information for the workplace. It's taken us 95 years to get to the point where we're willing to accept this distinction (and some in our field are still unwilling to accept it), but that's where we are now. And now we recognize that it is knowledge services that will pick up on what specialized librarianship has been doing all along and take us into the future. Knowledge services, with its emphasis on excellence in information management, knowledge management, and strategic learning, is

what specialized librarianship has been about all the time, so we're naturally positioned to lead in the information industry in the future.

**IO:** Why are you writing the history of SLA?

**GStC:** I'm doing this for a number of reasons. First of all, it's a very personal thing. I love this organization, and I want to see us make it succeed. I think the best way for us to do that is to take a look at where we've come from, at what some of our predecessors have experienced, and see if we can't match their experiences to our lives today. But I also want to write the history because I write the kind of things that people seem to want to read. It isn't scholarly or theoretical or highly empirical or anything like that. It's telling a story, which is the way I write. Even the management books I write are framed around a reader sitting down to learn something about how to get from A to B and enjoying reading about how to get there. And history is great fun to write, to research, to study, and just to think about. I wrote another organizational history about 15 years ago, about a cultural institution in New York, and I learned more about New York (and American!) society than I ever expected to know. I loved the learning, and now the same thing is happening with the history of SLA.

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# Discovering Corporate Virtual Reference Services

By Stephen Marvin

*Stephen Marvin has presented at several conferences and focus groups and interviewed virtual reference services in an academic library. (Marvin, Stephen. "Process Toward Virtual Reference Service." Presentation at InfoToday 2002, May 16, 2002, New York, New York. <http://www.infotoday.com/it2002/presentations/marvin.pps>.; "Virtual Reference at the Reference Desk: Making E-Reference EZ." Presentation at the Internet Librarian 2001 conference, November 6, 2001, Pasadena, California. <http://www.infotoday.com/il2001/Wednesday.htm>). He is president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Special Libraries Association. Stephen currently works as Reference Coordinator at the FH Green Library of West Chester University, West Chester, PA.*

## • • • • • Rapid Results Through Real-Time Services

**This article reviews companies that provide virtual reference services and offers an insight into current services and techniques. Various types of libraries are included so that the reader can compare a range of information services, from large global corporate libraries to smaller companies with a solo librarian. Some companies experienced external economic and competitive advantages that led them to make internal changes, while others developed reference services because of internal forces or efforts by librarians.**

### Introduction

The information in this article was collected during the Philadelphia Chapter Special Libraries Association Roundtable Breakfast in 2002, where corporate librarians from various industries shared their views of and developments in virtual reference services. And during the InfoToday 2002 conference in New York and the SLA 2002 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, attendees participated in brief interviews on the subject. Information was also requested over electronic mail management services. Further study is needed to encourage corporate libraries to promote virtual reference services. (See American Library Association. Appendix 1—Software Feature Checklist, from

A Virtual Reference Primer, ALA Editions. <http://alaeditions.virtualreference.net>.)

### Background

The aim of virtual reference is to form a seemingly live Internet connection with a customer who needs information. (See Ware, Susan, R. Scalese, and P. Howe. "Interactive Reference at a Distance: A Corporate Model for Academic Libraries." *Reference Librarian* 2000 (69-70) p.171-179. <http://dois.mimas.ac.uk/DoIS/data/Articles/julhmoogey:2000:i:69-70:p:171-179.html>). Goals include 24/7 live assistance via chat, voice-over Internet protocol (VoIP), or video webcast (IPTV) tools. Other goals



include features to push Web pages or allow the librarian to control the computer. Backup tools may be added, such as a link to frequently asked reference questions (FAQs), subject guides with embedded Web links, and a catalog including books, Pathfinders, Web resources, e-journals, and other links. The service may also have backup resources such as e-mail service and document management utilities.

### Corporate Needs

Unlike public, academic, and government information agencies, corporate libraries are, of necessity, more proprietary in nature. Corporate customers of virtual services are concerned about security issues. When purchasing a book online, they do not want to unintentionally expose proprietary information by asking a question of an unidentified person on the Internet. The potential for the problem exists because employees are active participants in conferences and produce significant works for inclusion in proceedings or transcripts.

Some corporate libraries no longer offer catalogs of their collections. Their intranet pages direct the internal user to topics or to general search engines available on the Internet. Corporations will use new live reference services such as the recently created merging of the Library of Congress's CDRS and OCLC to create QuestionPoint. At a recent Web seminar on QuestionPoint, a corporate librarian asked how the company identity would be concealed. Many companies are familiar with and recognize the high-quality collection and contact with subject expertise that is available from services like QuestionPoint and see it as a positive new potential tool. QuestionPoint also includes a Knowledge Base from global participating institutions including the subject expertise of the Library of Congress.

### Corporate Settings—Cultural Heritage

Special libraries share resources, knowledge of new tools, techniques, and technologies. SLA chapters, among many other library groups, are active in electronic mail lists, sending questions frequently. It is common practice for peers to summarize the responses they get to their questions on the mail list for the benefit of all subscribers. They also know how to search the mail list archives for answers to past questions. In many pharmaceutical firms, chemical companies, or food services, librarians and other researchers are prolific in publishing their current research, their activities in associations and conferences, and their consultant work. Corporate libraries are also willing to share their specialty knowledge of virtual reference services with public libraries, perhaps for the benefits of good public relations and expanded name recognition.

### Products

Participants said they were frequent users of pcAnywhere, WebX, and NetMeeting for reference transactions. Most of the libraries use WebX or NetMeeting as audio only; others incorporate Internet and video connections. A transcript or archive is available

immediately in text, audio, or webcast form. Companies such as the Hay Group or Capital Group used Lotus Notes, Sametime, and Sametime Meeting to conduct "lunch and learn" programs, the main purpose of which was training. Capital Group had a "learn at lunch" webcast series. Some of the librarians mentioned the need for training in the development of critical thinking and critical evaluation skills. Participants also mentioned interdepartment meetings with marketing staff and concerns related to accounts and revenue control. Interlibrary loan was not a common interest or goal, possibly owing to the mixed membership of the group.

Corporate librarians have had intranets for years and are now discussing the need to develop portals. Portals are a way to group the presentation of links and information. The portal should have the look that the customer wants and should fit the customer's needs. Portals can be designed with links to e-mail or other pages and will target specific audiences, for example, professional journals, and document delivery. Portals are divided into many parts called portlets and tools called widgets. Portlets are the range of specialized services that support individual manipulation, storage, and retrieval of information. Widgets are like small electronic tools that facilitate what the customer may need, such as calculators and translators.

### The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Library

The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) Library (<http://www.oscars.org/mhl/nfis.html>), also known as the National Film Information Service and Margaret Herrick Library, and affectionately called Oscar's Library, preserves the cultural heritage of the 20th century on film recordings. The library is involved with aggressive digital content management for the collection. The library does not own the rights to much of the content of its collection. The production studios jealously guard their interests and retain many of the rights. The library provides phone-ready reference, e-mail service, and an electronic catalog using the Endeavor system. The materials are generally not allowed to be circulated. The circulation system tracks items for conservation or preservation purposes only. The staff generated its own database from InMagic, which is currently accessible only in-house. They are also producing an index, the Annual Index to Motion Picture Credits. Unique to its collection are press kits, which contain the only source of information for music cue sheets and end credits. The library also houses many unpublished scripts. The library often works cooperatively with the American Film Institute, the British Film Institute, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the Library of Congress. Reference services are fee-based, although the library does not own the content. The catalog, recognized as a tool for information service, can be accessed on the Internet for additional content on artifacts, oral histories, posters, and manuscripts. Although they will not reply to fax or e-mail requests, the staff will refer people to the fee-based service. The public can conduct research at the library with assistance.



## Special Libraries—Developments

Each of the following companies applies virtual reference services, whether specialized databases, portals for individuals to gather and organize their own information, or more synchronous services such as online chat or consulting services or other real-time offerings. Many of these companies need rapid results to reduce the time required to bring a product for approval to market and to allow for more convenient communication among team members. The challenges for larger companies are the global scale of information and language-specific information that is difficult to represent electronically, such as chemical structures and reactions and mathematical formulas. Other digital formats create new challenges to finding similar information. The following companies have experienced these unique challenges.

### Industrial Light and Magic (ILM)

Sandra Joy Lee is a solo librarian at ILM, whose collection is based almost exclusively on digital images and digital asset management. (For more background see Lee, Sandra Joy, "The Work of Digital Archiving." Presented at the 1998 Annual Conference, Association of Moving Image Archivists, December 9, 1998, Miami Beach, Florida. [http://www.amianet.org/04\\_Annual/04f02\\_Miami/4f02\\_11.html](http://www.amianet.org/04_Annual/04f02_Miami/4f02_11.html).) An example of a typical request is "anything that would show the effect of molten lava underwater." ILM uses systems and software that are incompatible among its departments. Although employees use an archaic method to contact the virtual reference services—via a department-store-like intercom—Lee does track questions she receives for FARQs. Lee identifies her major challenges as format disintegration and format migration. The library must position itself as a necessary company asset and must catalog at the shot level during the production process.

### Millennium Chemistry

Theresa Pinnell explains how she was able to engage in and take responsibility for the marketing of virtual reference services. She used forms for employees to ask their questions, with ample room for them to elaborate. More than 1,500 employees use the library's services—a big accomplishment. Employees received trinkets such as coffee mugs to encourage them to review the services, show value, and provide motivation. The service also has a portal, My Millennium, that allows employees to gather, search, and organize their information results. The library performs an analysis of the logs to meet potential unmet needs. The library also helps employees to find and use internal documents. The system captures, shares, and reuses the research results.

### Cell Genesis

Cell Genesis works to match appropriate technology with the capabilities of the country. Mara Matsumura described the partnership between the information technology department and the library. (See Schairer, Cheryl, Theresa Pinnell, and Mara Matsumura, "Knowledge Management: User-Driven Approaches at Biopharmaceutical Companies": Presentation at the SLA 2002 Conference, June 11, 2002, Los Angeles,

California. <http://www.sla.org/division/dpht/phtsla02.htm>.) The virtual reference services include a portal and a document management program—Qumas Document Management System. The library works more on behavioral use of the library than on technology. The library helps employees with electronic filing of their laboratory notebooks.

### Leo Burnett

Leo Burnett is a company that provides product advertising support. It employs more than 8,000 people and has sales of more than \$6 billion. Its greatest strength lies in its ability to create branding by means of icons to market specific products. Some examples of successful branding icons to specific products are Tony the Tiger (Kellogg's Frosted Flakes) and Speedy (Alka Seltzer). Leo Burnett monitors several publications for public opinion as well as developments in various aspects of its business. Several departments are involved in sifting through information obtained from public sources that focus on competitors and advertising in general. The library also collects information on whatever may be discussed about the company. Burnett's famous Great Commercials Library (GCL) was founded in 1998. The GCL contains more than 6,000 award-winning spots from the 1960s onward. Each commercial has been coded and entered into a database to which employees have access worldwide. Teams can build lists of commercials they wish to check out before writing and shooting their own.

### Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Cheryl Schainer provides research information services that move beyond traditional reference library resources. Some typical questions: "Has anyone worked on XYZ assay before?" or "Do we have collaboration with Company X, and what are the terms?" Vertex responds to concerns as a global company and deals with services across time zones. The library has developed several uses for on-demand webcasts. There are help sheets, tips for searching, and laboratory notebooks in PDF and on microfilm. In addition, the library tracks and makes available current contents of project literature. Vertex also has developed a skill database including directories, yellow pages, and an expert's directory for forming a social virtual network. For security purposes, employees have photo images with descriptions of their activities. The expert's directory contains information on publications, degrees, work history, skills, computer languages, grants, projects, and a list of potential future work collaborations in a "who you know" database.

### GSK

Arlene Smith discussed building transition teams toward globalization of the company's 16,000 employees at more than 22 sites in seven countries. (O'Connell, Kathleen, and Arlene Smith, "The Evolving Global Model: What a Difference a Year Can Make!" Presentation at the SLA 2002 Conference, June 12, 2002, Los Angeles, California. <http://www.sla.org/division/dpht/phtsla02.htm>.) Because teamwork was essential to this effort, the work was divided among seven groups made up of analysts,



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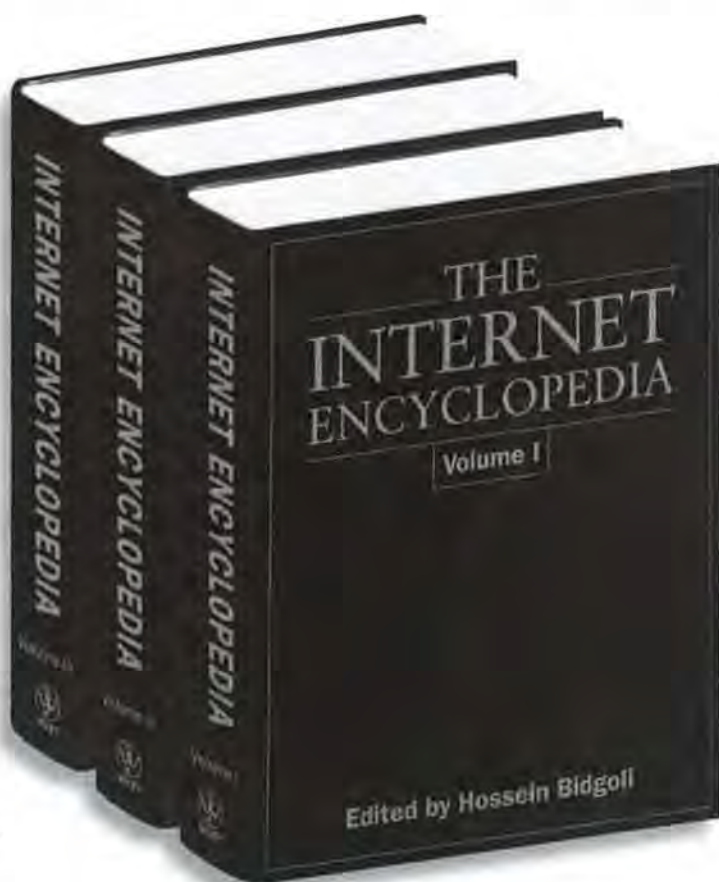
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publishing, management, and process, with input from documentation. Because of the size and global scale, licensing synergy was needed and benefited from a leveraged discount that offered broader access to information. Some degree of local autonomy was given up.

The results the teams developed included a uniform portal with elements and portlets for e-books, catalog, and Lotus Notes groupware and sections designed for research and development and information management. Part of the goal was to recognize additional cost reductions by acquisitions, document delivery, and virtual reference services. The library management system was integrated with product information systems, creating a unified desktop that emerged to provide both product information and services. The result of this integration was the downsizing of 19 libraries.

The new system created global 24/7 access and eased cross-site lending and circulation with faster turnaround time for the shared collection. The departments of research and development and information management achieved growth and development. Employees enjoy a new flexibility in their use of the services, as well more rapid turnaround time. These benefits created an immediate buy-in, commitment, and dedication among employees.

Smith mentioned that the U.S. services are being observed and used as a model for virtual reference services abroad. She sees a difference in the dedication to skills and professional development with attention to stress and burnout. This includes mentoring, individual support, and recognizing that people are greatest resource.

### AstraZeneca

Kathleen O'Connell described the information services she is developing with eight libraries that serve more than 50,000 employees in 19 countries. The libraries underwent significant change management under the theme "Global Reach, Local Touch." The system features customized literature research, and its goal is to deliver onto the global electronic desktop. AstraZeneca uses a central request system with advisory services. It employs the Adelp System for cataloging and indexing and a proprietary thesaurus called PL@net (See Nordborg, Anna Carlstedt Mats. An Evaluation of Topic Maps: A Master's Thesis in Computational Linguistics, Sweden, Goteborg University, May 2002 and Amiracl.) The AZ Glossary and AZURE (AstraZeneca Uniform Reference Environment) are also used. The virtual reference system of AstraZeneca will incorporate Amiracl as an information management tool with PL@net for product literature. This allows searching using normal keyword and access concepts via the thesaurus. The AZ Glossary is an application on terms and acronyms in common use with the company. For each term, a definition is given together with additional information about its ownership and use. The AZURE Business Glossary is a part of the AZ

Glossary containing business-related terms only. The importance of AZURE is its content-rich proprietary information on key business entities, sites, companies, countries, and currencies.

AstraZeneca prepared a five-year strategy that combines resources, budgets, skills, and virtual library and library space planning and includes marketing, training, and setting standards. The previous structure would not allow access from the desktop and had mismatched and incompatible software tools. The service commitment is ongoing, with clear roles, full accountability, and clear deliverables.



### P&G—Virtual Reference Services

Up until now, the discussion of enhancing corporate information services has focused on concerns about corporate culture, variety of service, and resource needs. P&G discussed its more focused and specific developments with virtual reference services. (Dunken, Mari, and Steve Elliot. "Taking Advantage of Electronic Resources; a Corporate Library Moves to a Virtual Library." Presented by Business Information Service, P&G Library, at SLA 2002 Conference in Los Angeles, California, June 9, 2002. <http://www.sla.org/division/dche/trisocrev.html>.) The goal of the P&G service was to move content into greater integration with corporate objectives. P&G reduced the number of libraries but also hired out librarians with specialties in chemistry.

Librarians help move unrelated or unrecognized information into relevant resources making complex access easy. A customer-friendly—or at least customer-familiar—interface was modified on the P&G intranet for encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other standard reference texts. Corporations use intranets with their corporate search environments. They seek to add value to their information services. They will associate information tools based on routine search needs or outsource to other service providers. Web design and management are priorities, with training for and awareness of customer questions that will enhance value-added resources. Such features allow customers to ensure security, manage their preferences, and produce chargebacks and other features to brand their sites.

P&G cut its research and development (R&D) budget in half. The size of this global company is impressive, with more than 250 global branches, serving more than 100,000 employees with demands from 5 billion customers. P&G operated 22 physical libraries with low usage and high costs. The P&G libraries had significant content but provided limited access and awareness. Staff had strong expertise as reference librarians. Online searchers were physically based in the library office building. Other offices in the same area as the library were frequent users. Less frequent were those who were in the same general location in the building. P&G developed three goals for its virtual reference services: Make content and services avail-



able globally. Support strategy to "webify." Reduce the number of libraries and achieve cost savings.

No catalog is currently available, but P&G is working on an online catalog. Customers are directed to appropriate Web resources. Customers can call on the phone to ask their questions or use the chat service. Customer use of chat or phone service is about 50-50. Staff is divided into three sections—providing quick answers, knowledge answers, or subject-matter-expert referral. The library is not a separate department but one of five research services for P&G, along with archives, records, trends analysis, and competitive intelligence. Information experts are available for information technology support, market share, intercorporation documents, industry analyses, patents, or competitive intelligence.

Reference services are provided either over the phone, chat, e-mail, and voice IP service. Web page resources include news items. The library also uses Pathfinder Web presentations and webcasts. The content is spread among many folders, each related to a topic, product, or company. Training materials were added also for quick access. Two librarians now perform the function of nearly fifty previous librarians. More services are delivered in virtual real time. In this environment, the less-is-more concept prevails, in that employees value specialized in-depth focused research more than access to available databases. An example of projects provided was the acquisition of IAMS cat food. The information team has helped train 2,500 R&D members since November 2001.

The research and development cuts, though painful, improved target, audience, and security. Now the library services are extending their leverage to the commercial business side and targeting and forming partnerships with key clients—more marketing, more training, and more alerts. The internal company data have been integrated and structured for improved access.

The chemistry division of P&G wanted more in the way of virtual reference services, including a high demand for more databases and topics, with multiple interfaces. In addition, an increasing number of chemistry questions were coming from people with no chemistry backgrounds. The company acquired services from an area university to answer many of the questions and used services created with joint partnership among university-owned companies with subject expertise that offer companies fee-based management of their information services. Ted Baldwin is a corporate librar-

ian/research associate through the external partnerships program of University Libraries. In this position, he serves as Manager of the R&D Information Center. This is a unique arrangement for the University of Cincinnati's corporate spin-off known as Equistar, <http://www.equistarchem.com/html/technology/index.htm>.

## Conclusion

Companies are laying off library staff or shutting down libraries as they rebuild, which is certainly distressing news. But opportunities are available for fee-based information services that include virtual reference tools, Internet connections, and outsourcing of research globally. Vendors that provide Web-based software packages can help by including chat services (not just one-on-one but many-to-many), VOIP, IPTV, Web page pushing, and other administrative tools. Document management software suppliers would be welcome in departments that want to control access to such proprietary information as laboratory notebooks. Research and development departments are being replaced by team projects, and are including the library as a partner. Solo librarians are beginning to address the need for virtual reference services with little support from their organizations. Solo librarians will need to make more aggressive efforts to brand themselves by networking, participating on teams, asserting their leadership abilities, using their creativity, or showing stronger self-perception, to name some examples. Several solo librarians reflected on missed opportunities. They regret not doing basic follow-up as a means to market themselves.

Corporations need to include mechanisms for change—by periodic analysis of the questions asked; by an outsider's view of the industry for new incites to products, processes, services or distribution channels; or by breaking down departmental guardianships of certain kinds of information fiefdoms. Working in teams is a winning strategy for many companies. At the same time, corporations need to retain as much of their own cultural structure as possible. Other technical tools used in virtual reference collections include bots—automatic responses designed to reply to users' question based on the terms they select—and blogs—Internet sites where a group can discuss a particular topic. Some companies are collecting the questions asked for future use as well as analysis of possible trends.







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# communications outlook

## A Logo Is Worth a Thousand Words!

By Anthony Blue

By now, most of us know all or part of the history of the association. Our beginnings? Well, we were founded in 1909, at a meeting in Breton Woods, New Hampshire, by a group of special librarians headed by John Cotton Dana (try saying that without taking a breath). What many of us are unaware of, or haven't seen for the most part, are the association's logos, which are a significant part of our history. Last month, I wrote a column on the importance of taglines and slogans ("Taglines, Slogans, and Bears, Oh My!"). I thought it would be appropriate to follow up with a column this month on the importance of logos, because they also are critically tied to the association's branding initiative.

What is known today as "the corporate identity" dates back to ancient Greece. The word "logo" actually means a name, symbol, or trademark designed for easy recognition. The use of logos as trademarks can be traced back to the thirteenth century. They have existed as long as there have been traders and merchants. They include mason's marks, goldsmith's marks, printer's marks, and watermarks for the nobility. Hundreds of years later, they remain a vital aspect of any organization's identity. Logos offer a visual image, describing the spirit of the company and the real story behind its products.

With the rise of the information age has come a rapid change in logos and their design, in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. The intangible nature of new technologies, and the diversity of products and services sold by many businesses via mediums such as the television, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet, has resulted in these changes.

SLA's current logo was adopted in

1997. The sphere with the arcs forming an S was designed to represent a new global image for the Association. Nike, known originally as Blue Ribbon Sports, was founded in 1960. The company had no logo until 1964, when it got a college student to create the widely recognized swoosh®. NBC was founded 75 years ago as one of the foremost news providers in the nation. It adopted the peacock as its mascot after color television was

introduced. In my column last month, I mentioned the power of Coca Cola's taglines over the years, but did you know that the Coca-Cola logo is used for more than 300 beverage brands and is one of the most recognized logos in the world? FYI: The SLA Brand Team is working on developing and testing a new association logo. For more information on the SLA branding initiative, contact SLA headquarters at (202)-234-4700.





# information trends

## The Joy of Toolbars

By Stephen Abram

How long is your bookmark list? Is it longer than 25? Longer than 100? Is it insanely long? Do you have more than 25 folders, let alone actual bookmarks? Stop the madness!

I had the opportunity to hear a talk this spring by the esteemed SLA member Mary Ellen Bates. She said that, as information professionals, we should stop keeping huge bookmark lists. The links go dead, we rarely check back to many of them, and they're a devil to keep organized. Bates felt that using a few of the usual search engines was the best way to find most sites that we might bookmark and even to discover new and useful ones. The more I thought about it, the more I agreed with her. Most of the time it's more productive to search and find a site than to use the bookmark function of our browsers and keep them up-to-date and organized.

Now here's the contradiction: most of the bookmarks on my PC are for search engines! Of course, many of them have died or gone into hibernation. The irony may be delicious but, think about it – how many of you readers still have bookmarks to Northern Light, awaiting the Second Coming?

So, putting on my librarian's thinking cap (the one with the notch in the back for the bun), I figured that there must be a better way. So for this month's column I reviewed the fantastic list of search engine toolbars that Danny Sullivan and Chris Sherman have assembled at their must-bookmark (more irony) site (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>). A search engine toolbar is basically a tiny plug-in for your browser that adds a bar, search box, or drop-down menu to the top of your browser screen and allows you to launch,

store, and manage searches directly from your browser without having to open a special website first. Most toolbars load within seconds using a broadband connection and are well worth the effort. Also, they can be uninstalled or temporarily hidden using your View/Toolbars drop down menu. Very convenient!

### Google Toolbar

(<http://toolbar.google.com>)

Besides letting you launch Google searches, the toolbar gives you useful contextual information such as the name and address of the site's owner, the site's popularity ranking, and related websites based on surfer behavior. Now, I know that most librarians and info pros have already installed the Google toolbar. Indeed it's often the only toolbar I see on many browsers. Well – big news – it has been improved and you must run, not walk, to download the new beta of the Google toolbar (<http://toolbar.google.com/index-beta.php>). My absolutely favorite feature is that you can enable/disable pop-ups (you know those annoying ads!) directly from the toolbar. You can also create a post to your blog from the toolbar. Another potentially useful feature is that you can store your information in the toolbar to automatically fill in online forms. It's worth a try!

### The Google Mini-Industry

A whole constellation of companies are creating neat little tools that work with Google but add features and functions that you might find useful. Do you find yourself using many of the specialized searches from Google? Then take a spin on GGSearch (<http://www.frysianfools.com/ggsearch/>). It's designed to provide toolbar access to the many specialized searches offered by Google, including Google groups posts, images, links, Uncle Sam, Linux, news, BSD, Microsoft, Google answers, stocks, Froogle, some

Google labs tools, and others. Gophoria is another cool tool (<http://www.gophoria.com/>). You just highlight a word on a web page and one quick click later you have a dictionary definition! This is great for researchers doing investigations outside of their normal professional vocabulary! Googlebar (<http://googlebar.mozdev.org/>) is for folks who are having trouble weaning themselves from that AOL Time Warner orphan, Netscape, but still love Google. This is a volunteer-created Google toolbar for Netscape. However, I predict that you will need to change to another browser eventually. Consider joining NA (Netscape Anonymous) for your twelve-step program now.

### Groowe Toolbar

(<http://www.groowe.com>)

The Groowe toolbar is essentially a meta-search engine seamlessly integrated into your browser's navigation area. As an info pro, you know that to "Google" is good but there are lots of reasons to search elsewhere and to use specialty search engines. Another useful feature is that Groowe supports search term highlighting on most of the engines – a blessing for long pages and quick scans. This toolbar provides access to Google and dozens of other search engines like Yahoo, Teoma, AllTheWeb, Alexa, AltaVista, and MSN Search. It's very easy to reinitiate searches one by one in all the engines it supports. It downloads quickly, and it's worth playing with to see if it meets your needs.

### Alexa

(<http://download.alexa.com/>)

Alexa searches Google but adds value too. My favorite feature is that the toolbar adds the ability to easily search the dictionary and thesaurus. I also like the user reviews (out of 5 stars) and the suggestions for related sites. You also gotta love the feature that lets you easily search just the site you're in at the moment.



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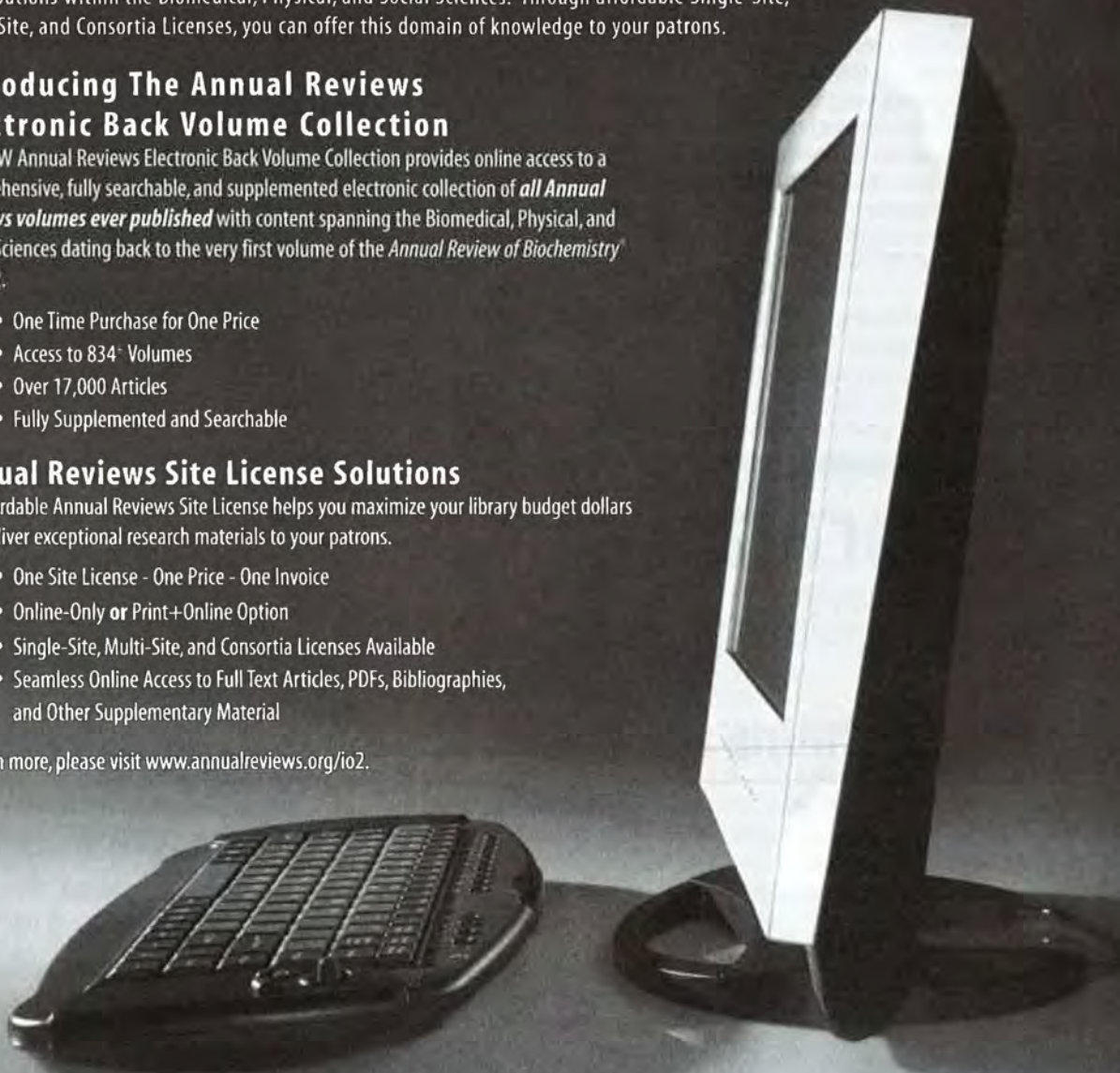
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### Teoma Search Bar

(<http://sp.ask.com/docs/teoma/toolbar/>)

One key way to avoid Google addiction is to put a few toolbars on your browser to ensure that you use other search engines. Teoma is a good alternative choice and its toolbar has some nifty bells and whistles! Besides search term highlighting and an online dictionary, I Love the quick and easy ability to e-mail any web page you're viewing!

### Ask Jeeves Toolbar

(<http://sp.ask.com/docs/toolbar/>)

Ask Jeeves has always intrigued me – its upending of the search paradigm by indexing the questions instead of just the information is fascinating. After all – isn't our stock in trade as much about the questions as it is about the answers? You can launch a general search using this toolbar but even better you can fine-tune the search to specific content like news,

dictionary, stock market, weather, events, or maps, or you can limit it to special groups like the Ask Jeeves Kids websites.

### Copernic Agent

(<http://www.copernic.com/en/products/agent/basic.html>)

Copernic products are among the granddaddies of Internet search tools. Copernic Agent Basic is the freeware version and Copernic also offers professional and personal versions for a fee. Searching more than 90 search engines and then usefully grouping them into categories is a great plus for the comprehensive searcher. Special features like eliminating duplicates and dead links as well as the ability to store results and searches make this a must-have tool for the power searcher.

So there you have it – about a half dozen toolbars out of many. One strategy is to pick one to download

every two to three weeks and play with it as your first choice for a few weeks. By the end of the year you'll be a better, more productive searcher, and naturally you'll be using a greater variety of search engines. Now, if we can only convince our users to surf using a variety of web search engines, maybe we can convince them that there are powerful web-based for-fee resources that can give them even better choices, results, and success.

### Happy surfing!

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# brand talk

## Evaluating Logo Designs

By Chris Olson

Last month I provided an update on Brand Team activities and shared insights into the synergy of branding and marketing strategies. This month's column summarizes the status of key branding activities and provides pointers for evaluating logo designs.

### What's the Brand Team Working on Now?

We are gathering member comments on various aspects of the logo design during small group preview sessions. The feedback will guide our refinement of the logo and its color palette.

The Slogan Task Force is hard at work on developing a tagline; the Public Relations committee is assisting with communications activities; and our vision, mission, and value statements are being fine-tuned to guide our brand messages. Brand Team members are involved in all of these activities to ensure a coordinated strategy for establishing our new brand.

### Brand Thoughts

Many of us find ourselves having to establish a new brand image or retool an existing one. If you've never been through the process, selecting a logo to represent your information products and services can seem daunting—especially if you don't have an eye for design or color. Here are some pointers to consider when evaluating a logo design.

#### 1. Leave your personal preferences at the door.

The graphics for an organization's brand image should not be judged on personal preferences. Admittedly, it is difficult to ignore personal styles and tastes. Our preferences for shapes and colors are integrated into the visual experience, and we incorporate our experiences into

perceptions and into design decisions. But remaining objective during the design evaluation process permits you to select a logo image that conveys the brand message of the organization, instead of a design that matches your personal color preferences.

#### 2. What is the first element or feature that catches your eye upon seeing the logo?

The objectives for a logo design include two important considerations: it should attract attention and stand out from other visual communications. Adopting a design that blends into a sea of visual communications defeats the purpose of a logo. If the logo isn't distinctive, it won't have a chance to be the visual reminder of expectations and desirable perceptions. Logos with visual hooks or triggers have a better chance of instant recognition and brand awareness in the marketplace.

#### 3. Does the design meet the objectives?

A logo design project usually includes the preparation of a design brief. A brief is a concise overview of the organization, its marketplace, competitors, key positioning points, and design objectives. The brief serves as a guide for designers and decisionmakers throughout the design development process. Included are statements outlining technical requirements and desirable image attributes. Refer to the objectives listed in the brief to determine if design objectives are being met.

#### 4. Does the logo leave an after-image?

Creating a visual memory includes imprinting an image in the mind's eye. Color and shape can help during the imprint process. Crisp clean lines, unusual shapes, and strong color help imprint a logo design, making it a brand memory and assisting with message recall when the image is seen again. Repeated and consistent exposure to a logo and

its brand message improves the association between the two, eventually allowing the logo graphic to become the symbol for the brand.

#### 5. Is the graphic easy to recognize?

We are constantly bombarded with visual images. Logos not only represent organizations, but they also represent products and services. Logos that are not unique can be confused with competitor brands. It is highly desirable that a logo establishes a visual space in the marketplace so that the brand image is easy to recognize and desirable brand perceptions are recalled instantly.

#### 6. Is the logotype easy to read?

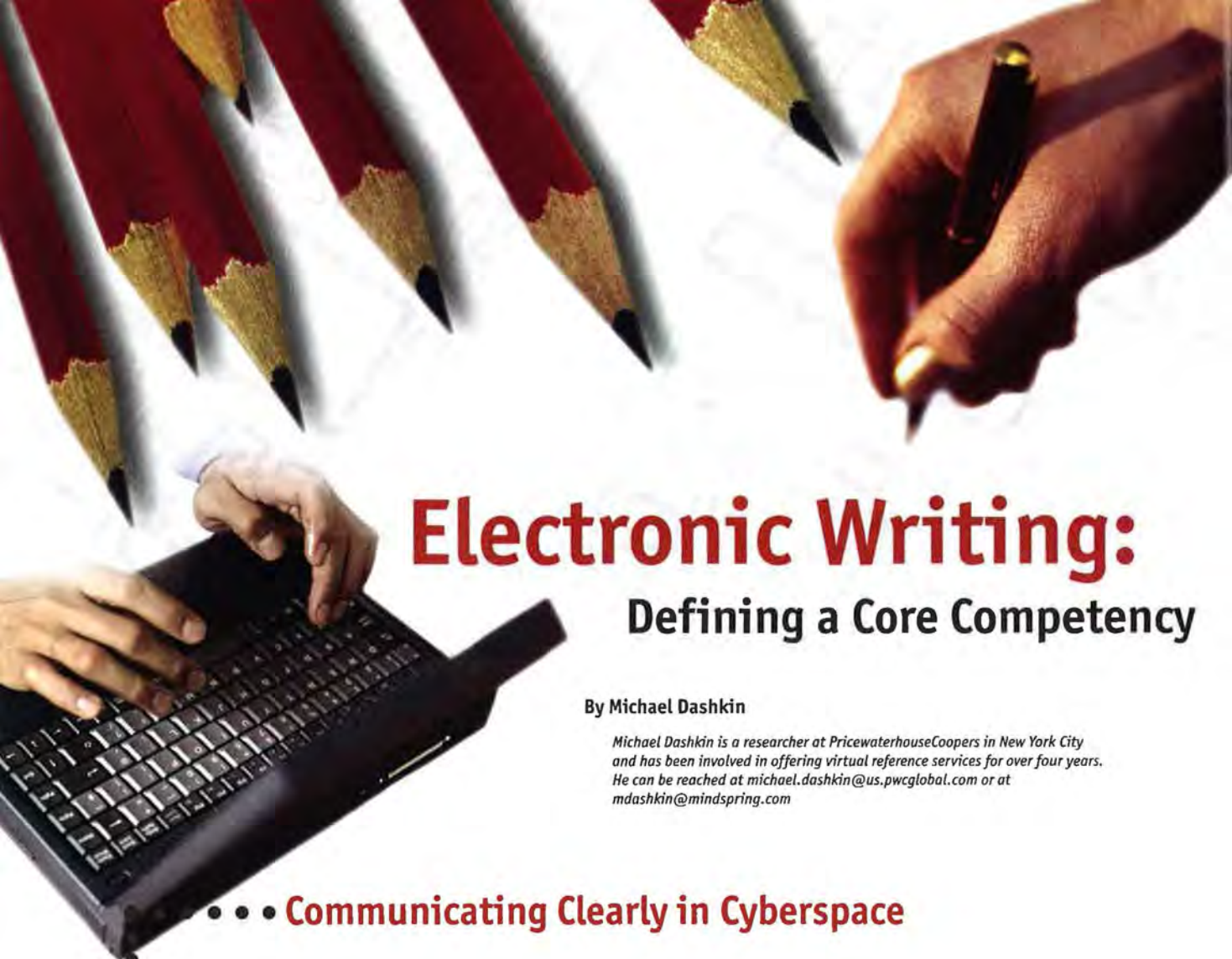
Most logo designs are composed of two components: the graphic and the logotype. A logotype is usually the brand name spelled out using a unique typeface or type treatment. The logotype should be easy to read and visually complement the graphic, helping the logo achieve its objectives. Logotypes are not bound by the rules of grammar. Likewise, the logotype does not guide the treatment of the brand name in a written context. A designer has the creative license to develop a logotype that meets the objectives of the brand image.

#### 7. Does the graphic remind you of anything else?

Everyone brings personal memories to the experience of viewing a graphic or design. Color, shape, and other features of a logo design can cause people to have different responses based on memories associated with past experiences. A logo design should avoid prompting a large number of people to recall competitors or undesirable messages. Instead, the logo should distinguish the organization it represents and visually differentiate it in a crowded marketplace.

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# Electronic Writing:

## Defining a Core Competency

By Michael Dashkin

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### • • • Communicating Clearly in Cyberspace

**Because we communicate electronically via the written word, everyone involved in the networked computer environment is a writer. Information professionals are at the forefront of an activity dubbed "electronic writing," that is, writing done within the medium of networked computing. Communications sent as part of digital reference services are an example of electronic writing, but value-added deliverables, weblogs, and technical communications also fall under the category. Information professionals are in need of standardized practices for writing and research that clearly articulate core competencies and recognize the unique challenges that electronic writing presents.**

#### What Is "Electronic Writing?"

The library field is a profession at the forefront of an activity that has been dubbed "electronic writing." This phrase, in use for at least a decade, is defined as writing done in and through the medium of networked computing.

The written nature of electronic communication makes us all writers. But writing for the electronic medium is not exactly the same as writing for print; rather, it shares the qualities of both writing and speaking. In fact, it involves more than just writing. It refers to the entire field of writing and publishing in cyberspace: the practice of designing, creating, organizing, and storing information, as well as communicating with end-users and distributing information.

Clear communication that is supported by critical thinking is vital to the primary goal of our profession: conveying information effectively. The challenge is learning how to write with clarity in the networked computer environment.

Within the information profession, the term "electronic writing" embraces:

- Writing done while offering digital reference services.
- Writing done in our role as "technical communicators"-gathering, publishing, and facilitating access to technical information.
- Writing done while performing





value-added analysis and conducting competitive intelligence.

- Writing FAQs, marketing pieces, surveys, etc.
- Writing done in the role of "newscaster," delivering information via weblog or website.

## The Networked Environment Reshapes Our Profession

Many recent articles in the literature have focused on how the networked computer environment is reshaping our professional boundaries. It's an exciting discussion. But the time for generally accepted, agreed-upon standards is approaching, and the library/information science curriculum needs to be revised to reflect these standards. Currently, no such standards exist. In place of standards we have individual initiatives and local practices developed by information professionals to cope with their new responsibilities in the networked environment and in virtual libraries.

Electronic writing is prominent in virtual libraries. The growth of the virtual library has propelled change, introducing new practices that require information professionals to assume new roles and work in new ways:

- As face-to-face and telephone interaction with patrons declines, the percentage of requests that we respond to in writing increases, so that librarians working in digital environments have, sometimes unwittingly, become writers.
- The character of our writing becomes a highly visible sign of our service. It must convey a positive impression to end-users.
- End-users may feel that the transition to virtual libraries means that they have lost services, so virtual libraries must find ways to make service offerings more attractive. Well-written, value-added deliverables are a tool for accomplishing this goal.
- Traditionally, in the ephemeral, word-of-mouth way that librarians have delivered their knowledge and experience, the value and impact of the information went unrecorded. In contrast, virtual library work practices turn our knowledge into a tangible work product.
- Well-written, attractively designed deliverables not only deliver content, but also function as effective marketing pieces.

In the electronic environment, the meaning of "publish" is changing. The librarian-as-intermediary was a good fit with the old print publishing model; a better fit with the new electronic publishing environment is the librarian-as-writer. In the print model, information seemed to come from a distant authority; the electronic model presents it as coming from an accessible colleague. The print model produced hardcopy materials that librarians needed to maintain; the electronic model allows for librarian-authored and -designed documents.

Because librarians are in a profession at the forefront of electronic writing, an obvious role for us is as instructors of computer/multimedia literacy skills to our patrons, helping them acquire the skills necessary to communicate,

work, and create within the networked environment. Such instruction is consistent with the literacy skills training that has always been a mandate of our profession.

How well prepared are librarians to function in an environment requiring electronic writing skills? Although the MLS curriculum assigns writing projects in most courses, it may not offer courses in the skills needed for this kind of writing. Library/information science programs offer courses that teach technical skills such as HTML coding or discuss larger social theories surrounding "online interaction," but they may not offer guidance in managing the practical communications issues that information professionals face working in the networked environment. Librarians are being called on to write a wide range of instructional, technical, and informational materials on such varied subjects as information technology, human resources, and finance. And they are writing for an equally broad range of audiences, from the administrative assistant to the senior manager. Moreover, their work appears in a diverse range of electronic contexts.

In the professional literature, on listservs such as the DIG REF listserv, at conferences, and in other professional forums, librarians discuss electronic communication and digital reference best practices. However, although our profession has conducted informal benchmarking studies to arrive at standards, there are no generally accepted standards, which leaves individuals and departments to develop their own local ones.

## My Own Experience

I work at a digital reference desk with several colleagues, providing in-depth responses to research requests on a broad range of industry and financial topics. We also offer user assistance with a research application on our firm's intranet, which provides 24-hour support, offering basic information and statistics and serving as a channel for more complex research requests, linking staff to researchers. Professionals in our group also manage vendor contracts, evaluate and select research resources, offer advice to lines of service and industry groups, and conduct competitive intelligence research.

Influenced by the demands of electronic writing, I worked to change my role within the group to embrace an expanded skill set. Fortunately, I work in a virtual library group with managers who are receptive to new ideas. After we made the transition to a digital



reference model, I looked for ways to help make the practice successful. I thought about how the end product that our users were receiving differed from the way we delivered information in the past. I suggested improvements to the "gateway" to our digital help desk so that it would describe our group more clearly, wrote a description of our service for marketing purposes, and wrote two surveys—a user satisfaction survey and a return-on-investment survey—to be sent out upon closing requests. I thought about what a patron should expect to see in response to a query and improved my responses, making the way I presented my findings clearer, writing replies that balanced brevity and comprehensiveness.

Being interested in writing, I started to look beyond my digital reference duties to see where else I might contribute. I authored simple deliverables, that is, self-assigned briefs that I circulated only among my fellow researchers. I did short write-ups on the Tasini decision (concerning copyright, freelance authors, and electronic reuse of articles) and created a chronology of events concerning the Enron collapse. I looked for topics that librarians would consider timely and relevant. My writing style and format had a direct, journalistic, objective tone. The briefs were posted to an electronic knowledge base for easy access.

I also worked with my managers to develop more complex, lengthier research reports on topics about which my firm's decisionmakers wanted to be better informed. These topics included a review of Securities and Exchange Commission filing sources and an analysis of the evolving Platform for Privacy Preferences (P3P), a proposed standard for online privacy protection. These reports were posted to a section of our intranet containing links to research sources and contributed to a growing repository of briefs authored by colleagues.

For role models, I looked to other knowledge workers, such as journalists, who publish their knowledge and base their reputation and authority on what they publish. Information professionals, rather than thinking of ourselves as either generalists or as subject authorities, might try thinking like journalists who cover a "beat," defined as "the news source or activity that a reporter is responsible for covering." Journalists aren't experts in their beats, and they don't strive to be. But they do possess knowledge about and contacts in their beat. They may or may not cover one particular beat throughout their entire career. The librarians who maintain information-related weblogs are already stepping into this role. It's a natural for such librarians because they are using research and

critical thinking skills that our profession has always made use of, in the process helping patrons define the "real subject" that they're interested in, staying current with sources and trends, and helping to provide a context for the delivered information.

In my work at a virtual reference desk, I've found that writing has made me a better researcher because—

- Having to write down my research findings means that, if I'm to deliver coherent results, I need to better understand the topics I research. I find that I'm more involved with the issues, value, and meaning of my research. Having to write down my findings keeps me on a continual learning curve.

- I've found that often I have to "translate" what is said by one group so that another group can understand it—for example, from information technology analyst to upper management, or from industry expert to consultant. I've found that it's important to understand how to write not only about a particular subject but also to a given audience. When we do this "translation work" well, our writing builds bridges to colleagues.

The definition of librarianship is in play as never before. Opportunities have emerged for us to shape the course of our profession even as we each redefine ourselves: to rewrite our job descriptions, to develop best practices that will become standards, and to help steer the future of our profession.

## Electronic Writing in the Library Curriculum

MBA and other professional programs often include writing and communication courses in their curricula. In addition to the available courses in subjects such as "Human Interaction with Computers," "Computer Literacy," "Online Interaction," "Digital Reference," and "Computer-mediated Communication," library/information science programs should offer courses that would explore both the practical and theoretical issues involved with reading, writing, and researching in electronic media, clearly articulating these skills as a core competency and explicitly recognizing the unique challenges electronic writing presents.

Such courses would go beyond information technology skills training to combine theory and practice, offering practical instruction as a compliment to students' engagement with theoretical issues. The goals for such courses would include the following:





- Understanding the importance of writing in the electronic environment for the information profession
- Developing practical writing skills for this environment
- Understanding the larger impact of the Internet on communication
- Understanding how computers mold communication; seeing how the medium shapes such components as style, etiquette, and message length
- Understanding that we as information professionals can teach our patrons and colleagues electronic literacy skills
- Learning how to write, design, and publish hypertext documents; skill-building in the use of applications like PowerPoint, FrontPage, Publisher, Acrobat, and Dreamweaver
- Understanding theories of electronic textuality
- Understanding the implications of multimedia for organizational information strategies

Library/information science programs could also help to promote consistency in value-added deliverables, helping to establish generally accepted standards. Early on, information professionals who work independently recognized the value of well-written and -formatted deliverables and led the way in developing deliverables with a consistent look that function effectively as marketing pieces.

Within organizations, information professionals with an interest in writing, a desire to do in-depth analysis, or a flair for technical communication have led the way in electronic writing, often teaching themselves the necessary writing, graphic design, technical communication, or Web design skills. Bringing these practical skills into the library/information science curriculum will better prepare students to assume writing challenges, and, as librarians increasingly take on these new responsibilities, their professional efforts will be better recognized and rewarded.

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# Why the Information Age Demands We Change The Profile of Medical Libraries

By Evagelia Lappa

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## ● ● ● ● ● IT and the KAT Hospital in Athens

**THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO DEFINE PRIORITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH-SCIENCE INFORMATION.** For the health-information industry, the key to managing the increasing amount of scientific and technological data can be found in the use of integrated and advanced information management systems. In an environment where there will be a continuing demand for more efficient and robust automated systems, which will in turn compel health-care facilities to participate in the changing and complex information technology (IT) marketplace, librarians will play an exciting and crucial role in helping the users of medical libraries take full advantage of these new technologies and the benefits these offer.

Today, we stand at the threshold of a world where there are libraries without walls and, indeed, libraries without books—at least in the traditional sense. Most assuredly, however, this is not a world without books, or the information contained in them. The "books," so to speak, are just being housed differently, in what is called "cyberspace." All the information that is contained on the traditional printed page is now being adapted by IT to its new home in cyberspace. This information is being automated into integrated computer systems that, in turn, offer important and improved stock-management information. Technology, then, is very

obviously a catalyst for change: one embraced fully by the General Hospital, KAT, as we accept the challenge of combining direct practice and research in the medical sciences

The traditional brick-and-mortar library typically affords a user no easy way of knowing just what specific articles are stashed on the library shelves, no easy way of knowing what books are available at the time the user visits the library, and no direct indication of when a book or manuscript will be returned if it has been checked out by another user. Because of information technology,



however, the expectations of users of medical libraries have changed in recent years, and the associated challenges to librarians to meet their customers' growing expectations have correspondingly expanded. The growing presence of IT, and its ever-increasing sophistication, therefore, demands a level of professional knowledge of and experience with these technologies. In the future, there will need to be a way to support "virtual patrons" of libraries. We need, therefore, to change libraries' profiles regarding technology, emphasizing automation and networks that lead to more and better information that can be obtained with less effort. In creating these "libraries without walls" through IT, however, its cost-effective implementation should always be kept in mind.

As we enter the new century, new technologies have become thoroughly integrated into our work environment and, specifically, the culture of the library; meanwhile, further technological changes approach at a dizzying rate. No wonder we can hardly catch our breath! The scope and rapidity of these changes, then, frame the challenge the KAT library faces: how it can become a model electronic health science library in time for 2004, when the Olympics come to Athens.

### Medical Libraries in Greece

The hospital industry in Greece is under the auspices of three different ministries: Education, Health, and Defense. Some hospitals are under the guidance of both Education and Health Ministries. "Education," in this context, generally means universities, and a substantial amount of the education budget therefore goes to research and to the education of medical students. (In general, hospital budgets in Greece are relatively low when compared to those in Western European countries.) This means that medical libraries are usually the last recipients of the residue of those budgets, once these other claims on them have been made. Nonetheless, almost all the medical libraries in Greece are controlled by the state.

At the national level, hospitals and all other health-care units have libraries within their organizations. Nationwide, there are about 100 medical libraries specializing in biomedicine and related subjects. Most of these libraries have adopted new technologies that promote both the dissemination of and access to information. Only 20 percent of medical libraries, however, have joined the Hellenic Institute of Search and Documentation, an organization providing services to "virtual patrons": consumers of medical information who obtain it through the Internet or other IT innovations.

### The KAT Hospital's Background

The General Hospital, or KAT, was established during World War II. The rural community hospital facility initially had only 50 beds; over the decades, it has successfully raised funds to make improvements to the facility while improving the quality of patient care. Today, the KAT Hospital had expanded to a 700-bed capacity, and it is among Athens' most modern hospitals, with

excellent departments in emergency care, orthopedics, surgery, and rehabilitation. The hospital offers both inpatient and outpatient care. This facility also serves those patients who no longer require acute care, but still need inpatient rehabilitation center before they can be released and go home. The hospital's comprehensive health-care services are complemented by an independent university research center on osteoporosis. Over the last 15 years, the hospital has also operated a nursing school. Today, the KAT Hospital is the third General Public Hospital in Attica-Greece and, as a nonprofit organization, is part of Hellenic National Health Care System. The staff is 48% nurses, 10% specialized physicians, 11% registrars, 6% administrative, 15% technical, and 10% other.

### Information Technology Planning

In early 1995, the hospital drew up a strategic IT plan; its main recommendation was to procure patient administration and clinical information management systems, as well as to develop web sites and other Internet-based sources of medical information. The funding was provided by the Hellenic Department of Health Ministry. This project's goals were to change the structure and the culture of the hospital's organization, to enhance awareness of research sources including online database patient storage, to provide an integrated care model that would lead to better health-care outcomes among patients, and to give the staff the opportunity to participate in providing these services. In fact, the implementation placed heavy emphasis upon user involvement, particularly of managerial and scientific staff where the highest concentrations of end users would be found.

### Background of the IT Library

Like the most public health organizations in Greece, the KAT Hospital's exposure to IT has kept pace with the corresponding advances in computer technology, particularly in the development of microcomputers. Although automation of some sort may seem almost inevitable for most libraries, it is still necessary to think very carefully about why these changes need to be made and what automation hopes to accomplish, before IT implementation commences. Before we decided to go forward with the IT project, we had to discuss the procurement and appraise what invest-



ments were needed, in order to identify the benefits that could justify the cost of the implementation over the life of the system.

### System Procurement

Management theorists are increasingly critical of the "pure and visionary" approach to strategic planning, which sees it as the purview of a small and select group of senior management. The success of strategic planning is limited when it is divorced from the reality of implementation: how to achieve it and when to do it, and defining exactly what, in our case, an IT implementation strategy should involve.

Earl (1989) differentiates among information-systems, information-technology, and information-management implementation strategies. Making such a distinction is important when distinguishing between the reason for implementing an information system—the problem it is supposed to address—and the solution the information system offers. Too often, the technology is seen as a solution looking for a problem to solve.

The need for careful and transparently accountable planning with a system-implementation project is particularly keen during the procurement stage. Types of procurement vary with many products and services, and information technology, like many other expensive items, can be bought outright, rented, leased, or some combination of these.

A strategy for completing the integration of automation should be developed to guide the efforts of the team responsible for its completion. A strategic procurement within an organization should be based upon understanding the procurement's total value as well as understanding the procurement's application, from an initial assessment of its overall feasibility to an analysis of its actual physical design.

The initial assessment of procurement's feasibility is one of the checkpoints, at a point—at its very beginning—when a project can be most easily aborted. This first checkpoint of assessment of a project's feasibility is the time to determine whether the proposed procurement can fulfill the business requirements it is intended to meet; at the time of this first checkpoint, then, an analysis of the project's scope should be performed. The second checkpoint includes deriving the implementation plans and timetables, as well as how these will be monitored and controlled. The third checkpoint defines those responsible for completing specific implementation tasks, and to define performance standards and possible outputs.

### Purpose of the Project

More and more, librarians and information-management



professionals are applying computer-based technologies to improve access to information for their user communities.

Digital health-sciences libraries offer the potential to make information more accessible, even if the actual practices are

in remote locations. Digital libraries are used extensively by people around the world. These realities triggered our library's decision, then, to change its profile by using IT. Specifically, the purposes of our hospital's project were to (1) change the library's overall nature, (2) allow it to operate in a network environment, (3) expand the availability of all the information contained in the library, to all its users, through the use of these new technologies, (4) involve the users, and (5) turn our library into a "high-performance" institution.

The project was constructed around and executed according to a framework of activities, staff, and educational and budgetary concerns. The project's activities were to (1) define the overall organizational structure, (2) identify tasks, (3) design procedures and jobs to accomplish those tasks, (4) assign staff to those jobs, (5) design a work space and workstations, (6) prepare documentation, and (6) evaluate these functions. The project staff included the project manager, who was responsible for establishing the goals and objectives of the implementation; the project team, which consisted of employees from different disciplines; and the project board, who included a number of others involved in the automation integration. Project education placed special emphasis on user education. The project's budget incorporated the costs of designing and implementing the new layout required by the procurement, the purchase and installation of the actual hardware: the workstations and equipment, and the creation of the online databases.

### Library's Status Today

The KAT Hospital has a medical library that meets the needs of its primary users, the professional staff. It contains information on both medical and biological sciences. It is the largest such library in Greece. It serves the needs of faculties and medical students as well as guest users, provided the material is not removed from the library building. The library's collection is very up to date, with the latest editions of medical books, journals, and annual reports. The library uses the National Library of Medicine (NLM) classification system, developed by the Library of Congress in the United States; the NLM has been modified for the library's use so that it allows for specific entries and brings together in one place all aspects of a topic. Notations are mixed: preclinical sciences, for instance, are classified under the letters QS\_QZ, and clinical medicine under the letter W.



## Current Challenges

The focus of our effort is to make available to users all kinds of information at once, while also allowing users to search for what they want, locate it (whether it is in their own library, in another library, or in some other place or resource), request it, pay for it, and have it, where appropriate, electronically delivered to them. The tools exist that permit these capabilities, but we have to put these tools to their proper use. This means that our credo must be cost effectiveness: a seemingly simple concept in theory, but in practice a complex goal.

Before planning the new model, we first asked ourselves the following questions:

- Will the system be able to respond to changing needs?
- What do we really want from this project?
- When should a library automate?
- What information do we disseminate to the organization?
- What do we need now to further implementation?
- Where can we get information and how?
- Will there be a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the initial condition and the final state?

The library's catalogue is computerized (in a local system, online) and includes books, journals, annual reports, and statistical series. Although the Index Medicus Catalogue includes only the literature actually in the library, because this inventory is so comprehensive, many users have come to regard it as a bibliography of all medical literature. Each volume of the Index Medicus contains in one alphabetical arrangement author and subject entries for papers in all the important medical journals published throughout the world during the period it covers.

Recently, a computerized information retrieval system for medical literature, MEDLARS (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System) has been established by the National Library of Medicine; it is available through the Internet or through a central Europe host called DIMDI (German Medical Information & Documentation Institute). MEDLARS' purpose is to classify and store on magnetic tape medical-literature references from around the world. Every day, MEDLARS is updated through libraries registered as borrowers. The system has been devised to facilitate the production of the Index Medicus as well as to facilitate speedy retrieval of references on special subjects. It is expected that, using MEDLARS, the production time of the monthly issues of the Index Medicus will be reduced from 22 days to 5 days and its coverage of medical-literature references increased by millions of citations a year. Monographs and research reports are included in the Index.

In response to the changing expectations of users, and therefore to the associated challenges in meeting those expectations, networks now link the library's traditional clientele directly to these resources and allow access by new users as well.

## "Library As a System" by SSM methodology

During information-systems design, the idea of "the library as a system" involves using the rich context of the hospital environment as a means to investigate problems. "The library as a system" technique divides the task of systems development into systems analysis and systems design components, while encouraging user participation throughout the process. Using this as a guideline, we can both recognize the concept and achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. This concept is likely to be more commonly used.

Typically, a request is made, and a display is presented. The results that come from the request might be consolidated, and this might be handled by a client application. The client and server communicate via a "protocol" which is a formal set of rules by which computers "communicate" with one another. Protocols, in other words, are standards for intercomputer communication; for instance, when using a single, online system, a user would need to know the commands pertinent to the local system.



## Managerial Tasks

There are three managerial tasks: (1) to design the "planning for technology," (2) to understand both the user's needs and the applications designed to meet those needs, and (3) to determine both the cost and the cost effectiveness of these applications. The fundamental elements are to (1) develop the network resources and the information retrieval and resource discovery systems that make these viable; (2) collect references, large databases, and other survey data; and (3) compose the new electronic journals, full text online, and interactive documents.

To effectively use the IT that is being implemented, it is imperative that all users obtain the appropriate technical and supervisory training, and that all users are involved in the IT implementation as well as in the existing environment. Safety is important here.

A look at the technology and services environment of a library will establish the context for an implementation procedure. There are three phases to library automation, involving, respectively, centralized, local, and distribution components. The tools of the library environment that are targeted during the centralized phase of automation are the bibliographic utilities and the online hosts. The next phase of library automation involves local operations and also the development of an integrated library system (ILS), which is currently the dominant feature of library automation. This phase also includes investments in particular systems: not only the ILS, but also slide management, CD-ROMs, networks, and other information services. The third phase of library automation involves the creation of an integrated end-user environment and a virtual library; the challenge here is to provide seamless service to those users.

We next perform an economic analysis, including assessment of the costs and benefits of the project. This means first defining the problem, with a specific focus on what our information needs are. In procuring IT, the library needs to obtain the best quality for the best price.

## Information Needs

The purpose here is to ensure the users—health-care professionals—obtain the best possible information through fast and easy access to local as well as national and international database. Libraries that have thoroughly embraced the power of IT offer possibilities and opportunities to allow for the best level of communication with users, wherever they are.

One common strategy libraries use is to offer fee-based information services. Information, after all, is not free, to both the users of that information and the administrators of those information sources who are responsible for the library's budget. Therefore, we must know how much it will cost to change the profile of our library through automation, as well as the cost of providing specific services to users.



## Economic Analysis of the Library Entity

The "library entity" is the specific place where the services are offered to many different users. An investment should be based upon cost-benefit or risk-return analyses. An economic analysis of the library entity includes costs (both direct and indirect), benefits, contingencies, and alternatives.

Direct costs include the acquisition of hardware, software, and any computer peripherals that may be needed. These may also include expenditures, which could be considerable, on the acquisition of such items as furniture or the necessary upgrading of building infrastructure, such as air conditioning. Indirect costs include maintenance and the daily costs incurred in the continuing operation of the IT systems and services, including any costs incurred as a result of the online searches made by the users. Establishing an automated system also entails related costs associated with such activities as staff training and coding stock. New IT-related tasks and responsibilities may require hiring additional staff, or increasing the salaries of existing staff; these represent additional indirect costs.

## Online Search Services as a Cost Analysis

Online search services are appropriate to be used during cost analysis, and to help define cost objectives, because the costs entailed in doing these searches are easier to identify than those entailed by doing other reference activities. Online bibliographic searches are a product the cost of which varies based on user demand. The cost of online searches is defined here as both the cost of running the service as a whole and the costs entailed by individual searches.



Economic analysis, fundamentally, comes down to a question of what should be produced, how much of it should be produced, and who should get what is produced. A definition of a cost-benefit analysis would include the elements of this basic analytical framework; the fundamental issue with a cost-benefit analysis, then, is deciding what to measure. Analysts derive measures from the extent to which objectives may be met. For a library, then, one performance measure, or how well a specific objective is met, could be annual circulation. There are of course alternative ways for fulfilling objectives, and each alternative has its corresponding costs and benefits.

A cost-benefit framework, then, starts with defining performance criteria and what objectives would meet those criteria. These objectives are to be met through tasks, which would be paired in the analysis with alternative tasks, which may or may not offer fewer benefits at higher cost. These are modelled through computer simulations, in order to capture what the relative costs are of obtaining the objectives through these various combinations of tasks. Costs can be modified by anticipated contingencies. The benefits, or outputs, include better access to information, direct charging, market demand, added value, library holdings, free services, comprehensive and efficient social equity, and public investment.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is important to remember that the traditional library system is likely to be only one of a number of components of an environment geared to disseminating information, an environment that is rich in services that electronically distribute that data. Traditionally, the raw material of library services is the library's stock: a collection of manuscripts (journals, books, other documents) that are in the form of the printed page. A distributed network of terminals—for instance, the circulation system of the library's catalogue—can provide the opportunity to communicate by electronic mail. In addition, basic business-application software packages, such as word processing, can be used in the library's office. Certainly in the near future, the effects of automation will continue to expand, thereby enhancing our ability to serve our users.

The challenge is great, but so is the satisfaction. IT can change how customers interact with a library, and can save the customer time. The customer

- can have access to remote stores of information using online networks.
- can use an OPAC (online access public catalog), and
- can speed the process of document delivery from remote services.

IT allows users to search for what they want, to locate it (in their own library, in another library, or from some other resource), to request it, and to pay for it or have it electronically delivered where appropriate.

There is a conflict here, however, between the public

interest and commercial enterprises. The traditional model of library services is pure: these offer free activities that entail low cost, but which are, relatively speaking, limited in the scope of the information. Into the mix now goes IT, which provides added value to users, specialized services, and a richer, more comprehensive source of information; these added-value services, however, come at a cost, and make this model more expensive than the traditional library model.

Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that IT leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the availability and distribution of information. As Bayless' article noted, "The preservation of good medicine is dependent on information." So, when a library asks the question, "does our facility need modernization?" the answer should be "yes," so that it can continue to provide the best and most comprehensive information to users. Modernization is not only a cultural benefit, but also an economic necessity.

The author would like to thank the President of the General Hospital, KAT, and his staff, for the information and views they contributed, and for the many interesting proposals they made, in writing this article.

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## FOCUS ON SERIALS

**T**he collapse of RoweCom and the uncertainty it caused for many libraries and publishers over the past months damaged the reputation of subscription agents and shook the trust of librarians. Now that EBSCO has concluded the purchase of the RoweCom operations, we want to provide an update, express our thanks to those who stood with us and offer assurance to our new and existing customers.



F. Dixon Brooke, Jr., Vice President,  
Division General Manager  
EBSCO Subscription Services

The agreement EBSCO reached for the acquisition of the RoweCom operations was not the usual stock buy-out or monetary deal. It was unusually complex, and we had to enlist the assistance of our associates in the library and publishing industries to develop the least-painful plan for everyone involved. The acquisition of RoweCom's European operations was proposed first, and just as we could turn attention to the remaining RoweCom operations, RoweCom filed for bankruptcy protection in the U.S. Courts and debtors sued its parent company divine inc., alleging fraud. This changed everything. We could no longer deal directly with the people at RoweCom or divine. Now everything was a Court matter that had to be handled by attorneys and consultants hired as part of the bankruptcy action. This created much frustration and delay, causing negotiations to take months rather than weeks.

Now that the final closing hurdles have been cleared, we are addressing the immediate needs of the customers and publishers affected by RoweCom's demise. We are paying publishers for RoweCom Europe's customers' orders and stabilizing support for those customers.

We are providing electronic files to publishers and customers of RoweCom U.S., Australia and Canada. The files sent to publishers identify the orders the publishers have agreed to grace. The files sent to customers segregate the graced and non-graced RoweCom orders so that customers can determine the appropriate action to be taken. We are indebted to the professionalism of the RoweCom staff (approximately 60) for their assistance in this process.

EBSCO was extremely pleased that publishers representing more than 70 percent of the monetary value of the RoweCom orders participated in the pre-

paid order agreement. This is very good news for participating customers, as it means publishers will fulfill the majority of orders for 2003 materials. EBSCO sincerely appreciates the support of publishers and the patience of our new customers. Working together we have been able to turn a dismal situation into, if not exactly a "win-win," at least a "not so bad" for all parties involved. Participating publishers should be saluted for their commitment to maintain stability in the flow of information, for without their participation and support libraries

caught in this situation would have experienced a true nightmare.

Because of the situation with RoweCom, some librarians are now worried about "putting all their eggs in one basket." While we understand this reluctance, we believe the problem was not so much that there was *one* basket but that it was the *wrong* basket. RoweCom (a.k.a. Dawson, Faxon, McGregor, Turner, RoweCom, divine) had been unsettled for years, with numerous managerial and ownership changes. This turbulence was unique to RoweCom, is not the norm for subscription agents and certainly does not in any way reflect on EBSCO's historical business practices.

EBSCO is a privately held company that today is managed by the second generation of the founding family. Business decisions are carefully considered and made for the benefit of EBSCO customers and employees, not solely to please shareholders or raise stock prices. The family is committed to maintaining a quality company providing outstanding service to its customers. The financial rating consistently earned by EBSCO is the highest awarded, and the company is listed annually as one of the Forbes Top 500 Privately Owned Firms in the United States. EBSCO is willingly funding, without the benefit of revenue, the ongoing operating expenses for the Westwood operation to enable continuous support and service to former RoweCom customers for the balance of 2003; we expect to fully pay all publishers on time for 2004 subscriptions. And we trust that the librarians caught in the RoweCom collapse will reward us with their 2004 renewals just as we trust that EBSCO's long-term customers will continue our partnership into the future.



**CUSTOMERFOCUSEDCONTENTDRIVEN**



# copyright corner

## Preserving The Public Domain

By Laura Gasaway

From time to time this column has discussed the public domain and the important role it plays in U.S. copyright law. Two recent developments have significant potential to enhance the public domain. In fact, they are aimed at increasing the amount of material in the public domain in the face of the changes wrought by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the Supreme Court's upholding of term extension.

### Creative Commons

The most comprehensive proposal is the development of the Creative Commons, launched in 2001. The brainchild of Professors Larry Lessig of Stanford and James Boyle at Duke, the Commons encourages creators to place their works in the public domain. Should the author/creator not want to go that far, it encourages her to grant broad rights to the public through nonrestrictive licenses. The purpose of the Creative Commons is to increase the amount of raw source material available online as well as to make it more accessible and less costly.

It has never been authoritatively determined whether one can even place a work in the public domain.

Under earlier laws, copyright registration and notice were required in the United States; thus publication of the work without registration or notice resulted in dedicating the work to the public domain. The elimination of these copyright formalities under the 1976 Copyright Act makes it harder to put a work in the public domain since copyright attaches immediately upon creation of an original work and fixation in a tangible medium of expression. Whether and how to revoke this automatic protection has been the basis of scholarly debate. If it can be done, it certainly would require an affirmative act to revoke copyright.

The Creative Commons recognizes this controversy but attempts to create a method to deed works to the public domain. It has also developed metadata that can be used to associate these works with their status as a public domain work. Eric Eldred's Eldritch Press has deeded all of its publications to the public domain through the Creative Commons.

Later this year the Commons will work to build an "intellectual works conservancy," described as similar to a land trust or nature preserve to ensure that works in the public domain are not claimed by private parties. Authors will be encouraged to place their works in this public trust. It is not clear whether this action will work, so Creative Commons has proposed a licensing alternative.

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The licenses offered by the Creative Commons are free and machine-readable. They may be used for creative works such as websites, scholarly works, music, film, photography, courseware, and so on, but not for computer software. The blank forms are available on the Creative Commons website. The primary idea is to permit owners to hold onto their copyrights but to publicize the fact that their works are available free, which should result in greater online sharing. The licenses permit greater use of the work than would be allowed under traditional fair use. For example, a license might permit all noncommercial uses while prohibiting only commercial ones without a specific license from that commercial user. This would permit the copyright holder to commercialize a work and earn income from commercial uses. The owner determines what rights he will grant. Some will permit others to use their work in any way as long as they receive credit for authorship. Others may allow use and distribution of verbatim copies of their works but not allow any derivative works to be created without their permission, or the author might permit derivative works to be created but insist that users share the royalties.

One of Creative Commons' most interesting licenses is the Founders' Copyright. It permits the copyright holder to claim copyright for 14 years just as was done by the Founding Fathers in the 1790 Copyright Act, or for 28 years as provided under the 1909 act. During the copyright period claimed by the author, the Commons will list the work along with the projected date at which it will enter the public domain. The cost of this license is \$1. O'Reilly & Associates, who publish commentary about technology and society, have several hundred titles under the Founders' Copyright; they are listed on the Creative Commons website.

The Creative Commons launched the iCommons in March 2003 to draft country-specific licenses. The first two countries covered are Finland and Japan. Countries that wish to participate must provide a knowledgeable person (likely a lawyer) to work with the staff at Creative Commons to develop licenses based on the legal system and laws of each country. The aim of the international licenses, as with the U.S. licenses, is to create licenses that non-lawyers can easily access, understand, and use.

#### Public Domain Enhancement Act

The second development is the Public Domain Enhancement Act, also referred to as the Eric Eldred Act. This proposal by Eric Eldred (plaintiff in the term exten-

sion case) would give copyright owners unfettered rights for 50 years after the author's death. At that point the owner would be required to file a notice of continuation and pay a \$1 fee in order to continue the copyright for an additional 20 years. It is estimated that only 2 percent of the works published between 1923 and 1942, the first 20 years affected by the Copyright Term Extension Act, have any lasting commercial value. Therefore, the copyright owner would be unlikely to bother with filing a notice of continuation and paying the fee, and a huge amount of material could potentially pass into the public domain.

Individuals and groups that encourage a strong public domain favor this proposal, but the copyright owner community in general opposes it.

There are also concerns about whether this proposal runs contrary to international treaties. One provision of the Berne Convention is that a member country may not require any formalities to perfect the copyright. Filing a notice and paying the nominal fee could be viewed as such a formality, or it might be determined that formalities apply only to the initial acquisition of the copyright by the author/creator. Another solution might be to require registration of the work for the term beyond the 50 years that Berne requires as a minimum standard. It is not known how the courts would interpret this, however.

No published work will enter the public domain before the end of 2018, so the concern about its vitality is real. The Creative Commons appears to be a good way either to put works into the public domain or to make them widely available free of restrictions. The Eldred proposal is more controversial but represents some creative thinking about the problems of the shrinking public domain.

#### Notes:

See Information Outlook, "Copyright Corner," April 2003.

See <http://www.creativecommons.org>.

Id. The Creative Commons website contains this statement. "Notice: We do not license works for money or help collect royalties. We recommend that you visit the Copyright Clearance Center for such needs."

<http://creativecommons.org/projects/founderscopyright/oreilly>.

<http://www.petitiononline.com/eldred/petition.html>.







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# coming events

## September 2003

**PC Expo**  
September 16-18  
New York, NY  
<http://www.techxny.com/intro.cfm>

**Great Lakes Regional Conference V**  
September 17-19  
Grand Rapids, MI  
<http://www.sla.org/conf/grtlks/>

**SLA Virtual Seminar**  
Branding Master Class: Fine-Tuning Information Service Brands  
September 24  
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[www.sla.org/virtualseminar](http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar)

**30th Research Conference on Communication Information & Internet Policy**  
September 26-30  
Alexandria, VA  
<http://www.tprc.org/TPRC02/2002.htm>

## October 2003

**Theatre Library Association Performance Documentation and Preservation in an Online Environment**  
October 10

New York, NY  
<http://tla.library.unt.edu/symposium.html>

**Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA)**  
October 15-17  
Columbus, OH  
<http://www.oelma.org>

**American Society for Information Science & Technology (ASIST)**  
October 20-23  
Long Beach, CA  
<http://www.asis.org>

**North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries, Inc. -- Lighting the Future**  
October 26-28  
Sturbridge, MA  
<http://www.nahsl.org/2003/>

**SLA Virtual Seminar Knowledge Managment**  
October 29  
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[www.sla.org/virtualseminar](http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar)

## November 2003

**SLA Virtual Seminar The Visible Librarian: A**

**Marketing and Advocacy Primer**  
November 19  
Learn from anywhere in the world!  
[www.sla.org/virtualseminar](http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar)

## December 2003

**SLA Virtual Seminar Business and Planning**  
December 3  
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[www.sla.org/virtualseminar](http://www.sla.org/virtualseminar)

## January 2004

**Digital Information Exchange: Pathways to Build Global Information Society**  
January 21-23, 2004  
New Delhi, India  
<http://www.cenlib.iitm.ac.in/sis2004/index.html>

**SLA Winter Meeting**  
2004 January 22-24  
Albuquerque, New Mexico USA

## June 2004

**SLA Annual Conference**  
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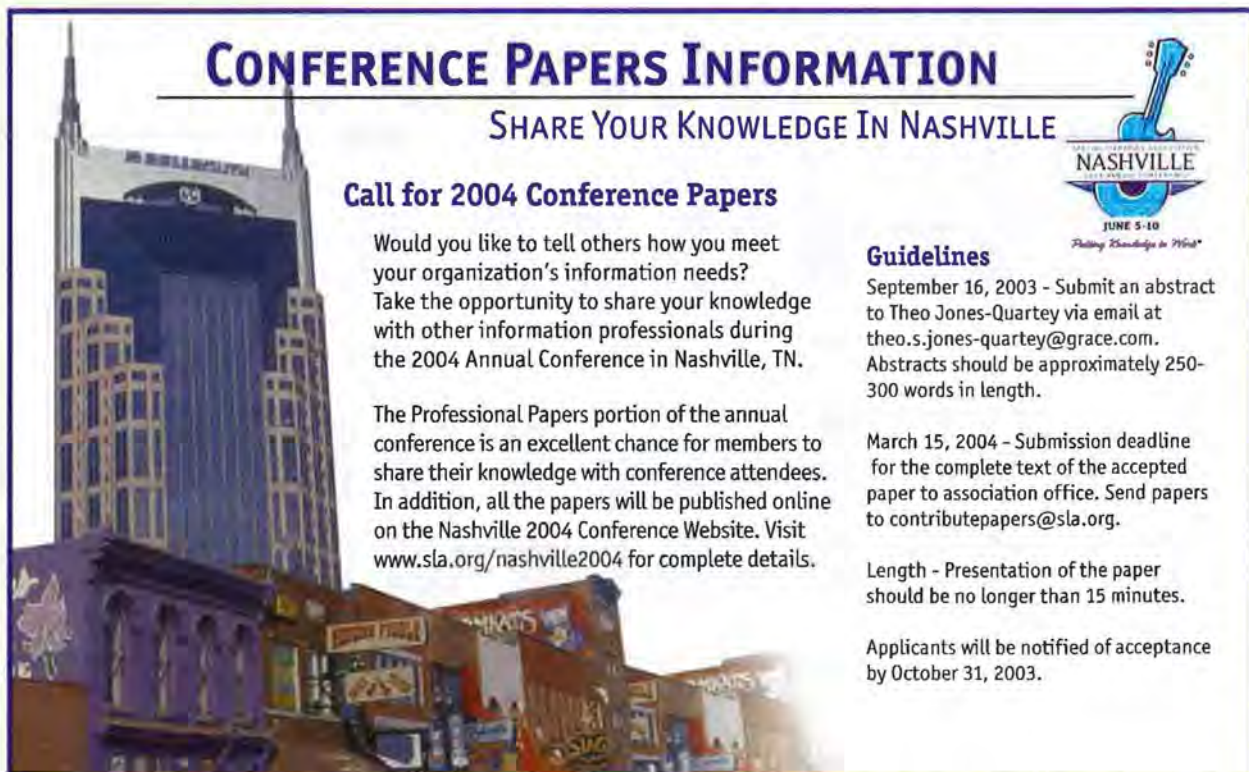
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